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LOVE DIVINE

STORIES ILLUSTRATING THE POWER OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

SUITABLE FOR READING AT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETINGS,
MEN'S OR WOMEN'S SOCIETIES, AND
SUNDAY SCHOOLS



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Obedience

I Cor. 13.7. "*Love endureth all things.*"

YOU should have heard the commotion. It was little Hans, who was to take his medicine. This must be done twice each day. The doctor had said that Hans *must* take this medicine, and there was no evasion possible; but little Hans screamed nevertheless. For three weeks matters had been in this state. Every time the bottle of medicine was brought out, there was wailing and lamentation. Hans had once for all made up his mind that the medicine was simply disgusting, though it certainly was not. His little sister Mary, who was entirely well, took some of the medicine the other day just to show her big brother how it was to be done. But Hans — no, he *could* not take it without screaming loud enough to raise the roof.

But yesterday — who could have believed it? — a great change occurred in him. Let me tell you how this came about.

Yesterday Hans's mother became suddenly very sick. Hans saw the doctor come and go. Hans noticed too that his father looked sad and serious. A strange feeling came into his heart, a feeling which seemed to choke him. And the thought came to him, "What if mother should die, just as my aunt died last year! Oh, that I could do something to make mother happy!"

He wondered and wondered if there was anything he might do for his mother. All of a sudden he had it: there on the table stood his bottle of medicine; no one had thought of it to-day. He ran into the next room and said to his aunt, "Dear aunt, please give me my medicine, right away and a big spoonful." His aunt could hardly believe her ears; she could not understand his sudden change, but she was not slow to fulfil his request. Little Mary stood by and stared at him in open-mouthed wonder that he did not as usual fight against the taking of his medicine, although it was plain by his face that the medicine tasted none too good. — Hans crept quietly close to his mother. How pale she was!

"Mother," he whispered in her ear, "mother, to-day I have taken my medicine and I haven't cried at all, not at all. Aren't you glad, mother?" His mother turned to him and looked so lovingly upon her little son and — then she smiled and said, "That was fine of you, my own little boy, you may be sure that I am glad," and she patted his head affectionately.

You may well imagine that Hans was overjoyed. He had made his mother smile and be glad over her little boy. He left the room quietly, he had succeeded in doing what he wished to do. — But what Hans could do yesterday when his mother was sick, he of course can do to-day when she is much better, and he can do it every day hereafter. And finally he will think that the bitter medicine tastes quite good — don't you think he will? — for love makes everything easy. Now there is no longer any crying when he takes his medicine, and — who knows? — perhaps soon he will not need to take any more of it, for just that very reason.

That is the way it all happened when little Hans learned to take his medicine. It was his love to his mother that taught him how to take it.

It was love that taught our Saviour in the garden of Geth-

semane to say, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22.42). It was love that taught the Christians in Caesarea to say, "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21.14).

It is love that will teach us to pray aright the third petition in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6.10).

The Snow Prayer

Ps. 51.10. "*Create in me a clean heart, O God.*"

Have you ever really observed how beautiful the snow is? A few years ago there were two little boys from distant India, who came over to England. They had never seen any snow. So one morning when they saw the ground and the trees covered with hoar-frost and snow, they came running, clapped their hands, and cried, "See, how pretty, how pretty!"

Yes, the snow is beautiful. David had noticed this; for in his one hundred and forty-seventh Psalm he says, "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth hoar-frost like ashes." It was David, too, who first said the *snow prayer*. "The snow prayer? What is that?" you ask. Listen, and you shall hear.

There was once a little girl who was out playing in the snow. But all of a sudden she came in with glowing cheeks and out of breath. She was in such a hurry that she forgot to sweep the snow from her feet. She ran right up to her mother and cried, "O mother, you can't imagine how beautiful it is out of doors! I couldn't help it; I fell upon my knees right in the snow and said the snow prayer." "The snow prayer? What is that?" "Why, mother! Have you forgotten it? Our teacher told us the other day that we must never forget that prayer.

The snow prayer is the prayer of King David: 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' Do you not remember it, mother?"

The snow prayer is a beautiful prayer, isn't it? You will find it in the fifty-first Psalm.

"Wash me." Imagine this: King David, old as he is, prays the Lord to wash him clean. For all he is so old, and for all he is so mighty, he is not able himself to wash away his sins so that he may be clean. He must ask the Lord to wash him, just as your mother washed you when you were little children. If David could not wash himself, neither can you wash yourselves. You cannot wash clean your unclean hearts; for sin is a disease of the heart. Every day you must pray, "Wash me, O Lord." The leper prayed in the same way, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8.2). And the publican prayed, "God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke 18.13).

"And I shall be whiter than snow." Think of it, — whiter than snow! Have you ever seen anything whiter than new-fallen snow? No, but our hearts will be whiter than snow, if we permit the Lord to wash them clean every day.

There was another little girl by the name of Mary, who also had learned to pray. Every morning and evening she would kneel beside her bed and pray out of a full heart. One morning her grandmother happened to be in the next room, but Mary did not know that she was there. Grandma saw the little girl kneeling; so when Mary came into the next room, she asked, "What were you praying for, Mary?" "Did you see me, grandma? I have two prayers, which I say every morning. Mother taught me one, the other I have made by myself; and the one that I have taught myself makes it possible for me to be good to-day." — The Lord's answer to the prayer she had taught herself, the prayer of her heart, consisted in this that He gave her the power to be good.

Matt. 5.8. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The Bible

Ps. 119.162. *"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."*

The Bible is God the Father's letter to His children. How happy a child is when it receives a letter from its earthly father! A child of God! Are you as happy over the letter from your heavenly Father as David was?

There was once a little blind girl. She was admitted into an institute for the blind. There she learned to read, as the blind do, by moving her fingers over raised letters. When she left the institute and returned home, the superintendent gave her a copy of the Gospel according to St. Luke. She was delighted to read in this dear book of the Saviour's love. Then the little girl became very ill. A long, long time she was confined to her bed, and to read was out of the question. Finally, however, she became better, and the first thing she called for was her dear book.

It was brought to her, but she began at once to weep bitterly. During her long sickness she had lost the sense of feeling in her fingers. How she wept! Now she could never, never again read the letter from her Father. — "But if I cannot see it, and cannot read it, I can at least press it devoutly to my lips," she thought. Suddenly her mother heard her shout with joy. In her lips there was still the delicate sense of feeling, — she could read it with her lips.

What is the End?

I Peter 1.9. *"The end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*

A mother was sitting at the sick-bed of her little child. The child had been very sick but was now better. The mother's eyes were bent upon the child as it lay sleeping. "What then shall this child be?" was her unspoken thought. Then she fell asleep and dreamed, and her dream was a continuation of her waking thoughts.

She saw the future of her child.

She saw her child as a bright little boy of five or six years of age. He was playing on the lawn, happy and contented. But suddenly he cast aside his playthings and ran up to his mother, who was sitting on the veranda. He looked strangely tired and dissatisfied. He laid his head upon his mother's knee. "Mother, I am so tired of playing. Shall I always be playing? Mother, is this the end and purpose of my life?" — "No, my child, you shall soon go to school and be a wise and good little man. That is the end."

She saw her child as a youth of fifteen or sixteen years. He had come home to spend his vacation. He looked very tired. Just as in his childhood he now nestled close to his mother. "Mother, if you only knew how tired I am of going to school. Shall I always go to school? Mother, is this the end and purpose of my life?" — "No, my child, you surely know that this is not the end. Now you are to go forth into the world, become famous, and make your fortune — this is the end."

She saw her child as a man of wealth, well known and respected. He lay upon his death-bed. The physician had just visited him and had said there was no hope. His mother sat weeping at his bedside. There was upon her son's face the old

expression of weariness which she remembered so well from his early childhood and youth. He looked into his mother's eyes and whispered, "Mother, now I am about to die; I am afraid to die. Mother, is this the end and purpose of my life?"

"No, no," replied his mother between her sobs. Now she endeavored to speak to her child of Him who came to save sinners from death and the judgment. But he would not listen. He looked with an expression of horror upon his mother and said, "Mother, why did you not ever speak to me about the end and purpose of life? Everything that you said was so wise; everything was so loving; but it was all worldly — all of it — worldly and only worldly. And now I am dying. Mother, you never taught me how to die. Mother, mother, why did you never speak to me about the end?"

She awoke. There lay her little child smiling upon her. Weeping, the mother fell upon her knees. She awoke in that hour to a new life. She came to a full realization of the end and purpose of life, and she sought diligently to teach her child to love the Child in Bethlehem, the Man on Golgotha; for this is the end and purpose of our earthly life.

Found

John 1.41. *"We have found the Messiah."*

A French preacher tells the following story.

One day I went to the railway station for the purpose of taking a train to a neighboring city. Just as I was about to enter the coach, a young man quite out of breath from running stopped me. His parents were pious people who lived in the city to which I was going. "Will you please greet my parents

from me?" he said. "Yes, indeed, I shall do so with pleasure," I answered, and climbed up on the platform. "And tell them also..." The engineer gave the signal for departure. "And tell them also..." The train began to move. "Well, what shall I tell them?" I asked somewhat impatiently. "Oh, tell them," he said with tears of joy in his eyes, "tell them that I have found my Saviour!" That was the best greeting beyond all question that the parents could possibly receive from their son.

* * *

In the city of Basle, Switzerland, a great mission festival is celebrated each year. At one of these festivals ten young men were to be consecrated as missionaries to the heathen. A preacher approached the young men and asked each one of them in turn, "Have you found your Saviour?" All answered yes, until he came to the last. This young man answered no. The preacher was astounded. "No," said the young man, "it was not I who found the Saviour, but it was the Saviour who found me."

Luke 15.5. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

The Three Enemies

Matt. 6.13. "*And bring us not into temptation.*"

You have all heard about David. Open your Bible and read the seventeenth chapter of the first book of Samuel, and you will see that when David was a young man he tended sheep in the pasture lands about Bethlehem. *David was a good shepherd*; he loved his sheep.

One day a lion came out of the forest and seized a lamb. Do you think that David ran away? No; in the name of the Lord he went against the lion and, at the risk of his own life, snatched the lamb out of the lion's mouth.

On another occasion a bear came and dragged away one of the lambs. It was no easy task, as you will understand, to be a shepherd in Judæa. But what did David do now? He ran after the bear, and when the bear rose up against him, he grappled with the bear and killed it. David risked his life for the poor lamb. Why did he risk his life? Because he loved the lamb; he loved every single lamb in the whole, large flock.

Was not David a good shepherd? You will all surely answer, "Yes, he was a good shepherd."

But you have heard of another shepherd, one who was a much better shepherd than David.

Jesus is the good shepherd; He loves His sheep; yes, His love includes even the very tiniest lamb.

On Golgotha He bought you with His own life, — you were "bought with a price." In holy baptism you were marked with the sign of the cross; you were baptized to be the lambs of Jesus, to be the children of God. Is not Jesus, then, the Good Shepherd? Kneel before Him and give thanks to the Shepherd who through baptism made you His own beloved lambs.

But be on your guard. There are three enemies which lie in wait for you to steal you away from the Good Shepherd.

Beware of the lion, children.

The apostle Peter says, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5.8). The lion is the devil, the lion wishes to devour you.

Beware of the lion, children.

But a lamb cannot conquer a lion; and so you cannot of your own strength win a victory over the devil. Therefore you must look for help from Him who is mightier than all the power of hell, Jesus, the Son of God. "I can do all things in him that

strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4.13). Yes, He will make the weak little lamb strong enough to prevail against the great, strong lion.

Beware of the wolf, children.

Our Lord Jesus says, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10.16).

The wolf is the world. The wolf steals upon you quietly and secretly. He wishes to draw you away from God, from prayer, from the Word of God, from the Good Shepherd, in order that he may gain possession of you for himself so that you may become wicked children of the world instead of being innocent children of God.

Beware of the wolf, children.

But a lamb cannot prevail against a wolf. And so you cannot of your own strength prevail against the world. You must, therefore, pray for help from Him who is mightier than the wolf, Jesus, who said to His lambs, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16.33).

Beware of the bear, children.

The apostle Paul says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7.18).

The bear is your own sinful nature, the old Adam, as Luther calls it.

The bear, the old Adam, wishes to embrace the new man which the Saviour implanted in you in your baptism. But he wishes to embrace him only for the purpose of choking him to death. He wishes you to do away with prayer, to forget Jesus, and to love sin and the sinful lusts of the world. Yes, in a thousand ways the bear endeavors to strangle your spiritual life by his embrace.

But a lamb cannot overcome a bear. And so you must not think that by your own strength you can gain a victory over yourselves. You must, therefore, pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you from the many, many dangers of the world, and

from the wiles of the devil. Pray to the Good Shepherd to follow you through all your life's journey and bring you safely through all of life's dangers and temptations. He will hear your prayer; for He is the Good Shepherd who loves all His little lambs.

I Thess. 5.22. "Abstain from every form of evil."

More to be Desired than Gold

Ps. 119.18. "*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*"

A warm July day a traveler stopped beside a cabin far up in Norway. He knocked at the door, as he wished a drink of water. After some delay a woman opened the door. Behind her were three ragged children, who were curious to get a glimpse of the stranger. A mere look at these four human beings was sufficient to inform the traveler that in this house poverty, disorder, and indolence reigned supreme.

The man secured a drink of water, and said a few words about Jesus to the woman as he was quietly observing the wretchedness of the little home. "If these poor people only realized what a treasure they have in their house," he said softly to himself as he was taking his leave. — The woman stood as if the lightning had fallen.

"Why didn't you ask him where it was, you dunce?" said her husband angrily, when she had told him of the stranger's words.

"Oh, I shall surely find it!" she replied.

She spent the whole evening looking for the treasure, and turned everything upside down in her search. She dreamed of the treasure during the night. The next day she continued the

search. When her husband came home at noon, there was no dinner prepared. Scolding and swearing, he left the house and went to the saloon. But the woman still continued the search.

Towards evening she sat down in despair, and it was with no friendly feelings that she thought of the stranger. Then her eye fell upon a shelf under the roof over in the corner. There lay a large heap of odds and ends. As she had looked into everything else she thought she might as well look into this also. And there she found the treasure. She discovered a large, thick book. As she was wiping the dust from it, the book fell upon the floor. It was a Bible, the Bible her pious mother had given her when she was confirmed. There it lay now upon the floor and was open at the first page. On this page was her own name, written by her mother, and under the name were the words:

"More to be desired than gold" (Ps. 19.11).

When the woman saw these words, she fell into deep thought. She thought of her childhood, when she sat on her mother's knee and heard the story of Him who left His heavenly home and became homeless in this world —. Happy days, but oh! how far away they seemed. And now — nothing but poverty, filth, and angry words from morning till night. And why? Like a flash of lightning the thought came into her mind: this book was the source of all her mother's joy. Her mother frequently said so. It was this book to which the stranger referred; this book was the treasure.

Ashamed of the disorder and untidiness of the room — it had been quite otherwise in her mother's house —, she began to put things in order, to sweep, and to dust. When her husband came home, she had a warm meal prepared for him and the children were neat and clean. The woman met every expression of ill temper on the part of her husband with quiet patience. This was not usually the case. She did not, however, breathe a word about the treasure. When all the others had gone to bed, she brought out again the old Bible and opened it at random. The

finger of the Lord directed her to the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke. She simply swallowed the words. She was the lost piece of silver; she was the prodigal child. Weeping she fell upon her knees and prayed, "Lord, have mercy upon me." — In the morning again her first thought was of the Bible.

Days passed by. Her husband was very much surprised over the transformation that his wife had undergone. He had not even thought of the stranger and his words about the treasure.

But one evening when the children were all in their beds, the woman took her sewing and seated herself beside her husband. "Do you remember, John, what I told you once about the man who came here for a glass of water and said that there was a treasure in our house?" Yes, John had a faint recollection of the matter.

"John, I have found the treasure!" John looked at his wife and was surprised to see the joy and happiness in her face.

She arose and took the old Bible from its shelf, — it was not covered with dust now, you may well imagine. "See, John, here is surely the treasure; see what is written here:

'More to be desired than gold.'

"This Bible I received from my mother; she herself wrote those words; and I know that it was Jesus who by means of this book made my mother the happy and contented woman she was."

John was plainly disappointed, and it looked as if a storm were gathering; for he had expected something quite different when his wife began to speak about the treasure. But she moved her chair closer to him; her eyes were filled with tears; she put her arm about his neck and whispered, "John, if this book makes me as good a wife and as good a mother as she was, then it really is 'more to be desired than gold.' I have determined to give it a trial and see if it really can bring about such a result; and, John, I think you ought to give it a trial too."

John remained silent, but new and strange thoughts began to revolve in his mind. His wife continued, "What a wretched wife I have been! But with the grace of God I shall be a better one from this day forward."

John was deeply moved at his wife's words. He looked about the room. You would scarcely recognize it, so complete had been its transformation from filth and disorder to cleanliness and cosiness. "Here is my hand, Mary. If you have been a wretched wife, I too have been a wretched husband. I will join you in making the trial."

That evening they read together for the first time a chapter from the old book. She read and he listened. When she came to the words, "To-day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19.9), her emotion made it impossible to read any further; she must fall upon her knees and give expression to her joy in praise and thanksgiving to God.

The day came when husband and wife could both praise God for having brought them back to His fold. Such results can be brought about by the Saviour, the Good Shepherd, through the Bible, the Word of God. Is it not, then, "more to be desired than gold"?

Ps. 19.10. "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the droppings of the honeycomb."

The Pearl of Great Price

Isa. 55.1. "*Come, buy without money and without price.*"

There was some years ago in the city of Copenhagen a young man who, like so many young men, had no place in his life for Jesus. However, he had of late begun to be concerned about

the salvation of his soul. Then he had a wonderful experience, for the age of wonders has not yet entirely passed away.

"I dreamed," he wrote in his diary, which was found among his possessions after his death, "that I came into a singing house. There stood a man with a golden jewelry case full of sparkling jewels, which he offered to the people. He prayed and begged them to come and take from the case all the precious gems which it contained. There was enough for all; all might come and take as much as they desired."

Time passed on and he had nearly forgotten his dream. But one Sunday it occurred to him that he ought to go and hear the Reverend Frimodt, who was at that time a very popular preacher. He went. The service had already begun, and as he opened the door he was filled with awe at the mighty power of the choral singing which filled the temple. This was the singing house he had seen in his dream. And when the singing ceased and he saw the preacher go up into the pulpit, lo! it was the very man he had seen in his dream. And when Frimodt testified of God's unmerited grace through Jesus Christ and besought his hearers to come and buy without money and without price that which would make their hearts rich, then the young man understood the meaning of the jewelry case filled with jewels.

It was therefore not strange that his heart was opened to receive grace through Jesus Christ and that he followed the example of the merchant who found a pearl of great price, and who went and sold all that he had and bought it.

In his hour of death he blessed Frimodt, who had persuaded him to accept the priceless pearl of eternal life.

Matt. 13.45, 46. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

Your Father is Waiting for You

A young girl was at home with her mother. She had a pleasant home, a fact which she did not then realize, though the day came when she did realize it. But life to her in her home seemed too narrow and insipid; she wished to get out into the world and enjoy her freedom, even as many another young boy or girl. She found employment in the city. Her letters to her mother became less and less frequent. Her mother wept often when no letter had come for a long time. But when at length a letter would come, the mother wept still more bitterly, because she could plainly see by it that her daughter had become a child of this world, and that is the heaviest of all sorrows that can come to a God-fearing mother. — Finally the letters ceased coming entirely, but through friends in the city the poor mother learned that her daughter had fallen; but they could give her no information as to her daughter's present whereabouts. The mother nearly gave way to despair. She loved her daughter so tenderly, and it almost seemed as if she loved her more now in her great extremity. She made her way to the city to seek her erring child. She sought day and night, but in vain.

Then an idea occurred to her. She had her picture taken and hung the picture in the waiting room of a Magdalena home, a refuge for fallen women. Under the picture she wrote the words:

“Your mother is waiting for you.”

Then she returned home.

Many women looked at the picture, but no one knew the poor mother whose picture it was. One evening a young woman came in. She gazed for a long time upon the picture. Then she said, “It is my mother, my mother!” It was the same face that had beamed upon her when she lay in her cradle. It was then happy and full of joy; now it was furrowed and sad. And

she herself — then her eye was pure; now she must cast her eyes to the ground from shame. She had wished to be free, but she had become the slave of sin.

But — “Your mother is waiting for you” stood there before her. Her mother, therefore, had not forgotten her, the poor, homeless, beguiled and fallen daughter. It seemed to her that the lips in the picture were moving and whispering, “Come home, erring child, come home. Your mother loves you and forgives you all, *all*.”

The sight of her mother’s picture had melted the ice in her heart and aroused in her soul a longing for home. She made the venture. Full of sorrow and shame she returned to her home. Mother and daughter fell into each other’s arms. Now she remained at home.

“Your Father is waiting for you.”

These words are written upon the cross where the Son of God died for your sins; these words are implied in the Saviour’s institution of baptism; yes, these words are written everywhere throughout Holy Scriptures. If you have wandered into paths which have led you astray, do as the poor girl did. She trusted to her mother’s love and came home.

Luke 15.20. “And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

His Worst Enemy

A man who was a devout Christian once had the following dream.

He was standing in a large and beautiful room brilliantly illuminated. Beside him stood a figure all in white, — an angel.

At one end of the room was a large mirror, reaching from floor to ceiling. The angel turning to him asked, "Do you wish to see your best friend?" Whom do you suppose the man then saw? He saw Jesus. And he could not grow weary of beholding the image of his Saviour in the mirror. But the image disappeared, and the angel asked again, "Do you now wish to see your worst enemy?" Can you guess whom he saw? The devil? No. He saw himself.

Rom. 7.18. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

Of What are You most Afraid?

Because of his fearless witnessing for Christ, Chrysostom had incurred the displeasure of the emperor Arcadius.

"How can I punish him most effectively?" the emperor asked his courtiers.

"Exile him," said one. "Deprive him of his property," said another. "Put him in prison," said a third. "Behead him," said a fourth.

But the fifth courtier said, "No. This is all insufficient. You are all mistaken. This man cannot be punished in any such way as you have suggested. If you exile him, O Emperor, he will still have with him, wherever he goes, his God; and this is to him fatherland and happiness. If you deprive him of his property, you will be punishing the poor; for he shares with the poor everything which he has. If you put him in chains, he will welcome them; for imprisonment will give him opportunity to commune unceasingly with God. If you put him to death, you will merely be opening for him the gates of heaven.

“No, if you wish to punish him effectively and to do him a real injury, you must beguile him into sin. He fears but one thing: to sin against his God.”

Ps. 86.11. “Unite my heart to fear thy name.”

Loss or Gain

A number of persons of the worldly-wise kind were once discussing the loss which a man sustains when he becomes a Christian. They agreed that it was a loss to become a God-fearing man. A Christian laborer sat listening to their conversation. Finally he said calmly, “Yes; you are surely right; he who becomes a child of God loses a great deal.” The others looked at him in astonishment. They had not imagined that he, a Christian, would agree with them.

“Yes,” the man continued, “you are surprised at what I say. But, really, I myself have lost much in becoming a Christian. I have lost my whisky, I have lost my ragged coat, I have lost my evil conscience. You are right, a man does lose much when he becomes a child of God.”

Phil. 3.7. “What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.”

Lord, have Mercy upon Me

A pious man was once traveling in Switzerland. He asked one of the young women servants in a hotel where he was lodging if she prayed. She answered quite curtly, “In this place we have so much to do that we have no time for prayer.”

The stranger said, "I shall teach you a good prayer directly from the Bible. The prayer was heard and answered the first time it was uttered, and it is short. Here it is: 'Lord, have mercy upon me.' Promise me that you will repeat these words every morning and every evening."

She promised that she would do so, and — she kept her promise.

A couple of years passed by. The traveler, it happened, returned to the same hotel. He inquired for the young woman.

"She was too good for this place which is frequented by so many worldly-minded people. She is now employed at the parsonage."

The traveler went to the parsonage and there he met the young woman.

With tears in her eyes she told him that she had at first uttered the words of the prayer in a perfectly thoughtless manner. But gradually she had begun to think: "Why should God have mercy upon me? Am I not good? Am I not happy?" When she thought seriously upon these questions, she found that she must answer them with a No. Then her prayer became warm and fervent. The Lord did have mercy upon her, and she found peace.

Matt. 15.22. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David."

The Thing most Precious

A missionary in India once visited a poor heathen Hindoo woman. She showed him her two children, a boy and a girl. The girl was blind. The mother was deeply troubled and wondered how she could appease her gods. The missionary spoke to her of Him who gave that which was most precious to Him, His only Son, as a propitiation for the sin of the world.

After a time the missionary again visited the Hindoo woman. The poor woman seemed to be still more deeply troubled. The missionary noticed that there was now but one child to be seen, the little blind girl lying in the cradle. When he asked where the little boy was, the mother burst into tears. "My boy, my beloved boy!" she cried, "I threw him into the Ganges to appease the gods." Horrified, the missionary for a long time was unable to speak. Finally he said, "But if you must needs give one of your children as a sacrifice to your gods, why did you not choose your little girl, who is sick and blind?"

"Why?" cried the poor mother. "Because the gods must have that which is most precious."

What the poor heathen woman here said in her spiritual blindness, we whose eyes have been opened to see the love of God in Christ Jesus should certainly say: "God must always have that which is the most precious."

But what is this most precious thing, — the only thing which we can give to God? Solomon gives us the answer in Proverbs 23.26: "My son, give me thy heart."

I shall tell you a story of the thing most precious.

An angel stood outside of heaven's gate. God the Father had said to the little angel, "Fly down to the earth and seek that which is most precious. And when you have found it, come back; and heaven's gate will be opened for you again, that you may enter."

And the angel descended to the earth. He flew about for days, for weeks, but he could not find the thing most precious. What he found everywhere was sin. Sad at heart he continued his search and flew on and on, for he longed to return to the kingdom of heaven whence he had come. He flew through a great city. It was night; but few people were upon the streets, and in those few the angel could see only that which was evil. Then he happened to see a light shining bright and clear in

the upper story of a large house. He flew to the window, and what do you suppose he saw?

There sat a mother at the bedside of her sick child. She was filled with sorrow; it was her only child. She fell upon her knees and prayed the Lord to spare the life of her only child; it was all she possessed on earth. She seated herself again at the bedside and all night long watched over her poor, sick child. Hour followed hour in slow succession. The child's breathing became fainter and fainter. When the first beams of the morning sun entered through the window they fell upon the body of a child whose spirit had fled. Tears streamed from the mother's eyes.

"Now I have found the thing most precious," thought the little angel. Very gently he passed his hand over the mother's cheek and gathered some of the tears. With them in his hand he flew up to heaven's gate and knocked. But the Lord said to him, "Yes, indeed, the tears which a mother sheds in love and sorrow over her child are beautiful and precious. But they still are not the thing most precious. Fly down to the earth and find the thing most precious."

The little angel became very sad; he wished to enter and stay within heaven's gate.

Again he descended to the earth. He flew through the big cities, he flew through the villages; he visited the children in the schools, and found here carelessness, laziness, and deceit. Everywhere he found that which was worst, nowhere the best, the most precious. — Then one day he flew over a vast desert. He saw but two human beings there, a young man and a young woman. They appeared terrified. The angel drew near to learn the reason for their distress. The young man lay upon the ground; he had been bitten by a snake and but little of life remained for him. His eyes, expressive of deepest anguish, rested upon the woman who knelt beside him; not a word, not a sigh escaped his lips. The woman's sorrow, also, was too deep

for words. They had looked into the future with such hope and courage; now she must say farewell forever to him whom she loved so dearly. He was thinking of what her lot would be now that he was about to die, and these thoughts made death all the more bitter for him.

Suddenly the young woman bowed down and with the energy of despair sucked the poison from her husband's wound. His life was saved, but she was doomed to death. And as she lay dying, she looked upon him in loving tenderness, happy in the knowledge that she died that he might live.

A tear fell upon the dying woman's cheek. This tear the little angel took, and with it winged his flight to heaven's gate. Now he was happy, for surely he had found the thing most precious. He knocked at the gate. But the voice of the Lord sounded through the gate: "Yes, that which you hold in your hand is beautiful and good. It is indeed noble to sacrifice one's life for others, but it is nevertheless not the noblest, the best, nor the most precious thing of all. No, little angel, fly down to the earth again and seek and seek; somewhere you will surely find the most precious thing of all."

The little angel was very sad as he again turned toward the earth. He would much rather have remained in heaven. He now flew into the palace of the king, he flew into the hut of the poor peasant, he flew into the place where the aged were gathered together, he flew into the midst of the young — always he found the opposite of what he sought, never what he sought.

Gloomy and disheartened the little angel flew over a meadow. He had just visited the market-place of a great city and he was sad at heart over all the wickedness he had witnessed there. But as he now was flying over the meadow, he chanced to see something which caused him to stop at once.

You shall hear what it was he saw.

An aged man was sitting on the grass. His face bore the marks of a life spent in sin. Beside him a little boy, happy and

gay, was romping about. The old man sat watching the child at his play. Suddenly the thought occurred to him: "You, too, were once just such a child as this, innocent and gay; but that was all long, long ago." His thoughts went back to his childhood with all its innocence and joy; they came to his youth when he had taken his first steps on the way of darkness with all its consequent confusion and sin. His heart was strangely moved. His thoughts moved on to the days of his manhood with all its indifference, unbelief, and worldly lusts. Tears began to trickle down the furrows of his cheeks. How glad would he be to live his life again, to be a child once more! Then there arose before his inner eye the image of Him, the Son of God, who had loved him to the death, while he, the old man, had loved the world and had despised the loving Saviour. With a shattered heart he fell upon his knees and, even as the Prodigal Son, prayed his Father for grace and mercy, prayed for a new heart, prayed for forgiveness for a misspent life, and prayed also for the little child, that the Lord might preserve him and keep him His own. It was a prayer that came from the depths of a repentant heart; therefore it penetrated to the heart of God.

The little angel became jubilant; now he certainly had found the thing most precious. Gently he gathered two tears from the cheeks of the aged man to carry them up to God the Father. Ah! they were heavy, those tears, — heavy as lead. But desire makes light wings, and almost at once the little angel stood before the gate of heaven. The gate opened immediately of its own accord; it was not necessary for the angel even to knock. Within the angels were already tuning their harps that throughout the kingdom of heaven there might resound the song, "A sinner that was lost has been saved." And God the Father said, "Come in, my little angel, now you have found the thing most precious."

Now you know what the thing most precious is. It is the

tears which come from a broken, contrite heart. These tears are precious in the sight of the Lord.

Ps. 51.17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

How Shall Ye Escape?

"How shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" This is the question which the Lord Jesus once asked the Pharisees (Matt. 23.33).

I shall tell you the story of a young woman who escaped the judgment of hell.

In a city in the northern part of England there was one night a large dinner party. It differed from the wedding feast at Cana in the respect that Jesus had not been invited to this party. The guests were happy and gay, they danced and sang and played cards. But there was darkness in their hearts, for the jolly company consisted of people who were the children of unbelief. In a corner of the room a little girl, nine years of age, was seated at a table. She sat listening to the conversation of the older people, but as this became tiresome to her she began to look into the books lying upon the table beside her. Among those books was a large, illustrated Bible. She opened it and her eyes could not turn away from what she saw there. It was a picture representing death and Hades as being cast into the lake of fire. The little girl had heard in school of Hades and the lake of fire; now the picture showed to her very eyes how terrible it was. The guests round about her were singing and playing and laughing, but the little girl could not take her eyes from the picture. A flash as of lightning from heaven fell into

her heart at this moment: the judgment of hell. She saw it before her in all its frightfulness and her soul was filled with unspeakable horror. What if all these people who were joking and laughing round about her were to be cast into the burning lake!

She could not keep this thought to herself. "I believe," she said to her mother, "that we shall all be cast into the burning lake."

The child had spoken these words in so loud a voice that not only her mother but nearly every one in the room had heard them. It seemed as a voice from God, which pierced the hearts; and to be sure it was a voice from heaven. Surprised, astounded, and vexed, they all fixed their eyes upon the little girl. "Nervousness," was the general opinion; and in a few moments the disagreeable interruption was forgotten.

But the little girl did not forget it. Years passed by. The child had grown into womanhood. Life, bright and cloudless, lay before her; she was young, beautiful, and wealthy. But on the distant horizon she could always see the storm-cloud of judgment about to rise, and over and over again the insistent question pressed itself upon her, "How shall you escape the judgment of hell?"

But she could not find the answer.

She went to church every Sunday, she tried to overcome some of her faults, she engaged in work of charity and benevolence; in this way she thought she might escape. But she did not find peace; on the contrary her uneasiness steadily increased.

Finally she became tired of it all. She determined upon a new course, by which she hoped she might forget the judgment of hell. She plunged into a whirl of gayeties; balls and dinner parties claimed all her attention, and everywhere she was admired for her beauty and good taste. But she could not dance away the unrest in her soul; always before her eyes stood the terrible vision of the judgment of hell. How should she escape? — Thus several years passed by.

It was a beautiful summer evening at one of England's most popular summer resorts at the seaside. Along the shore two ladies were promenading, engaged in earnest conversation. One of these ladies was our friend who as a little girl had seen the picture of the judgment of hell. Her dress was elegant, but her weary eyes betrayed a soul without peace. She had never been able to forget the judgment of hell, but the enemy of her soul had now suggested to her another means of escape.

For even if she could not forget, she could at least cease to believe that there was a heaven or a hell. And it was this matter that she was discussing with her friend this beautiful summer evening. She insisted that there was no one who could prove to her that there was a God or a judgment after death. But back of her bold words there was a trembling heart that could not cease to believe in the things which her lips even now were denying. And in the peaceful twilight of the summer evening her friend pleaded earnestly with her to seek Him whom God had sent into the world that we, the children of men, might escape the judgment to come.

All that she said seemed to be in vain; the young woman maintained her position. One thing, however, her friend could do, and this she did. She prayed to God in behalf of the unhappy young woman's soul. And now you shall hear how God hears the prayer of faith.

The young woman became more and more disturbed. Evil deeds, untruthful words, sins which she had long ago forgotten or had never considered of any consequence now appeared out of the hidden depths of the past and confronted her accusingly. This question deprived her of all peace: "If the Bible really is the word of God, how shall I escape?" And to this question she could give but one answer: "If the Bible really is the word of God, my lot will be to be cast into the burning lake." She could never rid herself of this terrible "If, if." She was suffering the keenest spiritual distress. She could not realize, she

did not know, that the God who had given her as a little child an insight into the judgment was seeking His child that had gone astray.

One winter evening she was walking down the street in the little city where she lived. The large mission-house which she had often passed by with indifference was brilliantly illuminated. She saw a throng of people, men and women of the poorer sort, entering it. She felt that she too must enter; an invisible power seemed to urge her on. She seated herself in an out-of-the-way corner. The preacher arose, opened the Bible, and read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, that wonderful prophecy of the living Son of God, the object of men's derision and contempt.

"Have you seen Him," came the preacher's voice, "the Man of Sorrows, whom men despised, yes, considered as naught? Are you sad at heart, sick, and bowed with sorrows? He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Are you burdened and weighed down with sin, come to Him; He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. Have you no peace? The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. Have you hitherto gone your own way? Hear what the Lord says through the prophet: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' Weary and sorrowing soul, do you not see that in Christ you will find forgiveness and peace? Why will you longer remain in your sins? Why will you continue in the darkness?"

Such was the invitation, simple and straightforward. Over in the corner sat the young woman, ashamed and fearful lest any one should recognize her; yet weary and sad at heart.

But here in this place the gospel of Christ's love found entrance to her heart.

Her fear?—it was gone. The darkness?—it had been transformed into light. Her sins?—they were forgiven. She was given courage to look up to Him who just for her sake

had become a Man of Sorrows, had been stricken, wounded, bruised. "He has loved *me* and has given Himself up for *me*," echoed and reechoed in her soul. A living Saviour stood before her and asked her for her heart as the reward of His suffering for her. Weary and tortured in soul she had come to the mission-house; with the joy of heaven in her heart she went away.

Now she knew how she should escape the judgment of hell.

A Book without Words

A book without words? "What a dry, prosy book that must be," you think. Well, you may judge for yourself. It was at a Christmas Sunday-school festival in the city where I live, that I first saw the book without words. In the course of the evening, when the candles in the Christmas tree had burned out and the little packages of Christmas presents had all been opened, the children were yet eagerly awaiting something. What do you suppose they were waiting for? They were waiting to hear a Christmas story. And all were glad when the pastor arose, for now they knew that the story was coming.

"Now you are to hear a story, children," said the pastor, "and that too the most beautiful story in all the world." The children pricked up their ears and were all attention. "Yes, prick up your ears," continued the pastor, "but above all, keep your eyes wide open, for now you shall see the story." He put his hand into a pocket on the inside of his coat and drew forth a thin little book. It was the book without words. He held it up so that all could see it. There were four leaves in the book, all of different color, but without any words. The children looked disappointed. All wondered what this might mean.

The pastor showed them the first leaf. "What color is this?" he asked. "It is black," cried the children in chorus. "But do you know what black is a symbol of?" he asked. "Yes," whispered a little girl, "mamma says that the blackest of all things is a sinner." "Your mamma is certainly right, my little girl, the sinner is black. But have you ever seen a sinner, little children?" "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God," the children all answered together.

The pastor then showed them leaf number three. "What color is this?" "It is white." "What do you think this color — white — is a symbol of?" All knew, but somehow they did not know just how to express it. "Well, I shall give you a start," said the pastor. "What must we be, if we are to come to Jesus?" "We must be holy, my mother says," whispered the little girl again, and her face became red with embarrassment. "You are a fine little girl, and your mother is a good mother," said the pastor and patted the little girl's cheek. "But your mother is not the only one who says this; your mother's Saviour says the same thing. He lets His apostle say, 'Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.'"

"Yes, but how is a sinner to become holy, how is the black to become white?" This question the children could not answer.

Then the pastor showed them that he had skipped one leaf in the book. "What color is this?" "It is red." "What is red a symbol of?" "It is a symbol of the blood of Jesus, for 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'" "That was a correct answer," said the pastor. "How then may a sinner be made holy?" "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," they all answered with one voice.

"Now there is but one leaf left," and he showed them the last leaf. "How does this look?" "It is of gold." "And what is that a symbol of?" "That must be a symbol of heaven," said the little girl, "for mamma says that in heaven the streets are

all of gold." "Do you all believe this, children?" Yes, they all believed it.

"There now, you have the story, my children; and was it not the most beautiful story, telling us how we sinners may come to Jesus? Now do not forget the lesson contained in the book without words. And in order that you may the more surely remember it, open the Book with words, the Bible, when you get home, and read the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the seventh chapter of the last book in the Bible, the Revelation of John. There you may read about the four colors."

So the children went home and told their fathers and mothers what a good time they had had at their Christmas festival, and some of them told over again the most beautiful story in all the world.

Rev. 7. 14, 15. "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Why do You not Love Jesus?

In a Sunday-school in England it happened one day that a little girl said to her teacher, "Please, ma'am, what does it mean to be a skeptic? I have often asked the two little girls of a neighbor of ours to come with me to our Sunday-school here. They would like to come, but they always answer me, 'Our father will not let us go; our father is a skeptic.' That must be something terrible, ma'am." "Yes, it is very bad," replied the teacher. "To be a skeptic is the same as not to love Jesus." The little girl nodded her head; now she understood.

One morning as the little girl was on her way to school, she

happened to see the father of her two little playmates coming out of the post office. She looked at him thoughtfully, — he was the man, then, who did not love Jesus. She could not resist the impulse to run up to him; she seized him by his coat, looked up at him and asked, "Why do you not love Jesus?"

The man was quite dumbfounded over the strange question; he could answer nothing, but he did not become angry. With tears in her eyes the little girl repeated her question. He hurried away without answering. The little missionary was grieved, and she said to herself, "Now I must have done something very foolish."

The man entered his office. He began to read the letters he had brought from the post office, but the words danced about before his eyes. It seemed to him that every letter which he opened began with the words, "Why do you not love Jesus?" Finally in vexation he cast aside the letters. He began to write, but his pen seemed rebellious. Time and again he would relapse into thought and then to his surprise he would find himself writing, "Why, why?"

He laid away his pen, put on his overcoat, and went out into the street. But it was just as bad there. It seemed to him that every one he met looked inquiringly at him, "Why do you not love Jesus?"

At last he went home. His two little daughters came running to meet him, happy to see him come home so early in the day. But to-day he could not endure their presence. It seemed to him that he saw in their very eyes a patient reproach and always that question, "Why do you not love Jesus?"

The day proved to be very long; it is not easy to "kick against the goad." But he hoped that he could sleep it off during the night. In this, however, he was disappointed, for sleep would not come to his eyes.

In the middle of the night he arose, hunted up a Bible and opened it at the Gospel of St. John. He began at the begin-

ning and read continuously to the sixteenth verse of the third chapter. When his eyes fell upon these familiar words, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life," he fell into deep thought. "Why do you not love Him?" was the question that echoed through his soul. He was unable to answer.

That night was a Damascus night for the skeptic. His experience was the experience of Saul; amazed and full of fear he asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" He fell upon his knees and poured out his heart before the Lord.

And the time came when he could say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21.17).

The Richest Man of the City

"The richest man of the city" was what Mr. Mortensen, a merchant, was usually called. People were always talking about Mortensen's money, Mortensen's horses, Mortensen's villa. Furthermore this same Mortensen went to church every Sunday and sat there in his own pew. Also it must be stated that seldom did a poor man leave Mr. Mortensen's door empty-handed.

One summer morning Mr. Mortensen was taking a horseback ride through the woods near by the city. The day before he had entertained a large company at dinner in his home. Many speeches had been made, in which the praise of the richest man of the city had been splendidly expressed. He rode into a thicket. There his ear caught an indistinct sound of a human voice. He stopped his horse and quietly bent aside a few

branches of the trees. What does he see? There upon his knees was an old man. It was the deaf old woodcutter, the poorest man in the city, Mr. Mortensen knew him very well. The old man was kneeling, his head bare, his tattered hat held in his folded hands. Beside him was his breakfast, — a crust of bread and a vessel with water. Bread and water, nothing else! And still he is giving thanks to God! A contented smile plays upon his wrinkled face. How could he be so happy? Not even Mr. Mortensen himself, the rich man, was so happy.

The rich man rode on. He tried to forget what he had seen, but continually a voice within him whispered, "This man is happier than you. He gives thanks for a piece of dry bread."

Gradually he was seized by a strange feeling of dread and anxiety. Yesterday he had been praised as the richest man of the city; now it seemed as if some one was whispering, "To-night the richest man of the city will die. Thou shalt die." A shudder pierced him through and through. He thought of the Bible's own words, "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee" (Luke 12.20).

The richest man of the city who was about to die — this was himself! Riches, friends, — all he was to leave. Die — and what then? Heaven or hell? The cold sweat trickled down his face. Another Bible passage occurred to him, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" (Matt. 16.26).

The day seemed very long; nowhere could he find peace. The evening came. Night came. His fear and anxiety increased, for death was drawing nearer and nearer. He tried to prepare for death, but it was impossible for him to think consistently. He saw himself already before the judgment seat of God. Hour after hour he heard the steeple clock strike. It sounded in his ears like the trumpet of the judgment, — "The richest man — of the city — die." "What a fool I really have been!"

But the night passed and the sun cast its first beams through his window.

He still lived! He could scarcely believe it. He arose and dressed. How pale he was! When he came out into the street, one of his employees met him and asked, "Have you heard that old Anders, the woodcutter, died during the night?"

Without answering he entered his office. Everything swam before him. He could yet see before him the poor man kneeling out there in the woods. So, then, it was this man who scarcely had food enough for the day, — it was he who was the richest man of the city.

The woodcutter died without leaving enough property to pay for his own funeral, but he died in peace.

"Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" (James 2.5).

John Three Sixteen

Is. 11.6. "*A little child shall lead them.*"

It was a dark winter night in the streets of Dublin. A little boy — a poor little wretch, without home or friends — was moving stealthily past the long rows of houses. It was bitterly cold and his ragged clothes gave him but scant protection against the severity of the weather. Finally he sat down and huddled up on a stone staircase. It seemed that he was waiting for someone. Yes, he *was* waiting, poor little fellow; for young as he was he had already entered upon evil ways. He had become a member of a gang of thieves. Now he was waiting for the

other members of the gang to appear, since they had already decided upon burglarizing a certain house this very night.

As he sat there, shivering with the cold, a hand was suddenly laid upon his shoulder. It was very dark, and he could see only that a tall figure stood before him. You may imagine that he was frightened. Then the figure began to speak to him in a voice that sounded quite friendly, "What are you doing here so late at night, my boy? A little fellow like you should not be upon the streets at such an hour as this. Hurry home and go to bed." "Yes, but I haven't any home," whispered the boy. "Poor boy, that is too bad. But say, will you go to bed if I find a bed for you?" "Will I? Yes, that you may be sure I will; and right away too," answered the boy. "Very well. At such and such a number of such and such a street you will find a bed." Before he could say anything further the boy was already off. "Wait a little," cried the stranger; how do you ever expect to get in? You must have a pass; no one is admitted without a pass. Here you have one; can you read?" No, the boy could not read. "Well then, remember that the password is 'John three sixteen,; don't forget it or they will not admit you. 'John three sixteen' is something that will do you good."

The boy set out, repeating to himself over and over again the words, "John three sixteen, John three sixteen." Finally he came to the house designated by the man. But now his courage nearly failed him—how was he to get in? With his heart in his throat he rang the doorbell. A key was turned in the door, the door opened, and a gruff voice asked, "Who is there?" "It's me." "Who is me?" "It's me, 'John three sixteen'," came the reply in a trembling voice. "Very well, hurry and come in then." And in he came.

In a remarkably short time he was lying in a beautiful warm bed,—such clean bed-clothes he had never seen before. As he was falling asleep he thought, "What a funny name that was; but I'm going to remember it just the same."

Next morning he received a bowl of warm milk and bread for breakfast. Then he had to go out into the streets again, for the home served only as a lodging place for the night. He wandered aimlessly about, up one street and down another. He was afraid that he might meet some of his former companions. He was deep in thought, reflecting upon the wonderful night he had passed and his new name. As he was crossing the street, he failed to notice a wagon coming at full speed; he did not hear the warning cry of the driver; and before the horses could be stopped, he had been knocked down and run over.

A crowd soon gathered about the bleeding, unconscious boy. He was laid on a stretcher and conveyed to the nearest hospital. After he had been gently laid in a bed, he regained consciousness.

It is customary in the hospitals of Dublin that the patient's church connection, name, and address are recorded. The nurse asked the boy if he was a Catholic or Protestant. He really didn't know. Yesterday he was Catholic, but to-day he was "John three sixteen." This was all the boy could say of himself.

In the meantime his wounds were washed and dressed. Before long, fever, resulting from his wounds, set in and he was seized with cramp and delirium. At times he screamed, and at times he whispered, "John three sixteen, John three sixteen. That was something that was to do me good, and it has."

The other patients listened. "John three sixteen." What did that mean? Finally it occurred to one of them to open the New Testament (a copy of which lay on the table beside each bed) at John 3.16. He read the glorious words, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." The other patients also looked up the verse in their testaments and read it; and all the time the little sick boy was either screaming or whispering, "It was something that was to do me good, and it has."

Strange, new thoughts arose in the hearts of many of the

patients. These words under the circumstances impressed them much more profoundly than many a sermon had ever done.

After a few days the fever disappeared, consciousness returned, and the poor little boy began to look about at his surroundings. Where was he? It was so quiet. All at once he heard a voice from one of the beds, "John three sixteen, how are you getting along to-day?"

"What do you say? How do you know my new name?" "Oh! you have hardly said anything else since you came here. You have been saying over and over again, 'John three sixteen, John three sixteen' and I can never thank you enough for those blessed words, my lad."

It affected him strangely that he should be thanked for anything, he, poor little wretch, who had never met with anything but cursings and beatings in all his little life. He became all the more amazed when the man who had begun speaking to him continued, "But do you know where those words — 'John three sixteen' are taken from? They are taken from the Bible." "The Bible? What is that?" He had never heard of such a book. "Oh, please read it for me!" he begged. And, when he had heard the verse read, he whispered, "How beautiful it is, how beautiful it is! Just love, pure love! And then a home not only for one night, but for ever and ever!" Soon he knew the words by heart. How happy the poor little sick boy was! "I have not only received a new name," he said, "I have received so much more besides."

The days passed. Some of the patients left the hospital, and others came to take their places. But our little friend must yet remain in his bed. He was never lonesome; he lived upon his Bible verse, and he had no idea of the use he was soon to be privileged to make of it. There was yet a soul in this roomful of the sick which was to be gained for the Son of God, and he, the little boy with the childlike, joyous faith, was to be the means of bringing this about.

In the bed next to him lay an aged man, who was very sick. One morning a Catholic nun came to his bedside and said, "Well, Patrick, how are you this morning?" "Poorly, poorly," answered the man. "Has the priest been here this morning?" she asked. "Yes, he has; but I am so afraid, I am so afraid to die. How shall I dare to die?" "Patrick, Patrick, you are indeed in sore straits," she said, "but look here, here is a rosary. His Holiness, the Pope, has himself blessed it; this will enable you to die in peace." She placed it around the man's neck, bade him farewell and went away. But how were a few pearls to give peace to a human being who stood face to face with eternity, heavy laden with sin and guilt? Poor Patrick groaned aloud. "God help me," he said, "such a sinner as I am. I do not dare to die. What shall I do? What will become of me when I die?"

The little boy heard all this. "Poor old man," he thought to himself, "he needs a pass." Then he said aloud, "Patrick, listen to me, Patrick, I know something that will do you good. I am sure of it, for it has already done me good."

"Say it then, say it then" exclaimed Patrick. Oh! if I only could find something that would do me good."

"Here it is. Now listen: John three sixteen. Do you hear, Patrick?" "Yes, yes, say it."

"John three sixteen: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Over and over he repeated the precious words.

Through these words Patrick received grace to die in peace, —with this pass he entered into eternity. And to men it seemed that he died a blessed death.

The boy regained his health. For a long time John 3.16 was his only text. The Lord blessed his faith. Kind-hearted people took charge of the homeless waif and he was put to school.

Now he is laboring for his Saviour.

The Little Girl's Prayer

This story was related to me by an aged man, Rasmus Nielsen by name, as an incident in his early life.

In his youth he served as a farm laborer in the employ of a man and woman who had recently been converted. Before their conversion they had occasionally read a prayer from a prayer-book but merely in a mechanical fashion. Now, however, they had learned to pray with heart and soul; and the spirit of grace and prayer had so taken possession of their home that their little daughter, who was scarcely old enough to talk plainly, begged her mother to teach her to pray.

One evening her mother, owing to the presence of visitors, forgot to hear her little girl say her evening prayer. When the child had been put to bed without prayer, she began to cry, and it was some time before her mother could understand what the trouble was. Her mother then took the little girl into the adjoining room in order that they might have their evening prayer together undisturbed. It happened that this was the room which Rasmus occupied, and as it was still early he had not yet fallen asleep, and so he heard the little child's prayer.

"Let me be Thy child, dear God," she prayed, "and let mamma be Thy child, and let papa be Thy child, and let Rasmus too be Thy child. Amen." And so deep was the impression made by the words of the little girl's prayer, "and let Rasmus too be Thy child" that he burst into tears when he related it to me.

The Riddle of the Cross

A new pastor came to a congregation in the north of Jutland. He was filled with fervent love for his Saviour, and it was therefore with the keenest sorrow that he noticed how indifferent and cold the majority of his parishioners were towards Jesus.

But before long his attention was drawn to an elderly woman in the church. Every Sunday she came to church with her hymnbook wrapped in a white handkerchief. No matter what the weather was she was always in her seat directly opposite the pulpit. He did not know who she was, but he thought she must be a very pious woman, owing to her eagerness to hear the Word of God. One day in making his pastoral rounds, he came to the house where this woman lived. As she had no home of her own she was living with her daughter, who was married.

The pastor was pleased at the opportunity which had finally been afforded him of meeting this woman and conversing with her. But a few minutes' conversation proved to him how thoroughly at fault his judgment of her had been. Love for the cross was a matter entirely foreign to her. He was very much downcast when he finally took his departure. Sunday after Sunday this woman had attended the services in the church and had heard about the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and it seemed that it had been without the slightest influence upon her heart.

She continued to attend the services regularly, and he often in his sermons addressed himself directly to her; but she remained unmoved.

The following winter her granddaughter entered the confirmation class. This was quite a new experience for the young girl, Joanna, by name. It seemed as though a new world was opened to her when the pastor in all the fervency of his love

for the Saviour painted the picture of the Crucified One before the children of the confirmation class. And when the pastor began his series of sermons on the passion of Christ, he was certain to find Joanna present and a very attentive listener. And the young girl learned dearly to love her Saviour.

Her heart was so full of what she heard that she could not refrain from telling it to others. Her parents would not take the time to listen to such things, but the grandmother could not escape. To her Joanna repeated what she had heard from the pastor, and her words were like glowing coals of fire.

And what happened? The words of the child had a more powerful effect upon the grandmother than all the sermons of the pastor.

One day as her grandchild was sitting and talking to her about Jesus, the old grandmother began to weep and exclaimed, "How wicked I must have been, since it was necessary for Him to suffer so!" Then she began to find the true explanation of the riddle of the cross. This hard heart was softened, the stubborn knee was bent in prayer; — little Joanna's Saviour became grandmother's Saviour also.

* * *

A little girl once saw a picture of the crucified Saviour. She was told that He must suffer so for the sake of our sins. The little child did not — as do so many both great and small — allow these words to enter in at one ear and go out at the other; no, she kept them in her heart.

Some time afterward the little girl was with her father in church. Over the altar hung a picture of the Saviour on the cross. She kept her eyes upon the picture. When the singing of the psalm was ended she whispered to her father, "Father, I shall be good, — He shall never die again."

This little girl also, young as she was, had begun to understand the riddle of the cross.

Ps. 97.10. "O, ye that love Jehovah, hate evil."

Too Early — too Late

Two boys in a Latin-school were together in their room. They were of the same age, about fourteen years. "No, no, it is altogether too early," said one, whose name was Henry. "What mother says is well and good, and I really mean to become pious and God-fearing some time, but not yet. It is entirely too early to become serious."

"What are you sitting there and talking about?" said the other, whose name was Frank.

"Oh! I have just got a letter from my mother,— a whole sermon, you may well believe."

"And you don't like it? I wish I had a mother; she might send me all the sermons she wished. But I have no mother."

"Well, you may read this letter, but be careful of it; I keep all my mother's letters." And he went out.

In the evening they met again.

"Here is your letter, Henry. It is a fine letter. I thank you for letting me read it."

"Yes, to be sure, it is a fine letter. So are all my mother's letters."

"Don't you intend to follow her advice, Henry?"

"Why, of course. That's plain enough, isn't it? Of course I want to go to heaven when I die. But it is too early to think about that matter yet."

"But your mother said something about the danger of postponing it."

"Well, you may go ahead and be God-fearing and pious if you choose; I for my part mean to enjoy myself for a time. It is altogether too early to be pious."



Years passed. The two comrades were now at the university.

Frank was studying to be a minister of the gospel, while Henry was studying law. Henry, however, was a student only in name. He was chiefly engaged now in the endeavor to have a good time. He had many friends. Frank and Henry seldom met, but Frank could never forget what a debt of gratitude he owed to Henry's mother.

One day they chanced to meet each other in the street. "Is it true that you are going abroad?" asked Frank. "Yes, it is. Do you wish to join me?" asked Henry in return. "No, Henry; you and your comrades would hardly wish to have me join you. But there is one thing you must promise me,— come and see me some evening before you leave. There is something I wish very much to discuss with you. If you wish to come, you will be very welcome."

Henry certainly did not wish very much to come, but he came nevertheless. When he came, however, he was in a hurry, as Frank perceived at once, to have the visit over with.

"I have so often wished to thank you, Henry, for a great favor you once did me."

Henry looked inquiringly at him.

"Do you remember that letter from your mother which you once gave me to read? That letter became the turning-point in my life. Among other things your mother wrote these words, '*Decide now for Jesus.*' And by God's grace I did so. Now I realize what it means to have passed from death to life."

"Yes, my mother was a remarkable woman."

"Was? Is she dead?"

"She died three years ago."

"Henry"—Frank threw his arms about Henry's neck — "Henry, if your mother were standing here now before you, what do you suppose she would say? She would surely say to you once more, '*Decide now for Jesus.*'"

"Yes, indeed, I shall sooner or later so decide, but not now. It is too early yet, I have other things to think about now."

Again a number of years passed by. Frank was now the pastor of a village church. One evening he was summoned to the hotel. A transient guest there had suddenly become very ill and he wished very much to speak with a minister of the gospel. Frank hastened to the hotel. When he arrived there, he at once inquired as to the condition of the sick man. "He is very sick," said the physician who attended him. "His suffering is not so severe at present, but his strength is failing. He desires very much to see a clergyman." Frank entered the dying man's chamber and seated himself by his bed. "My friend, can I be of any service to you?" he asked. "You are about to die. Have you any hope for eternity to cheer and strengthen your heart in your last hour?" A shudder of agony passed over the face of the dying man. He opened his eyes and stared fixedly at the pastor. "It is too late," he muttered.

The pastor bent over him. "Do not say it is too late, my friend," he said. "It is the eleventh hour, but Jesus is still waiting. 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,' He has said himself. Come to Him."

Again the shudder of agony passed over the man's face, and he said again, "It is too late."

The pastor could accomplish nothing. There was something about the sick man's face and countenance that seemed familiar to the pastor, yet he could not remember where he had met with him before. All night the pastor remained at the bedside. When the day dawned, the struggle was ended. The dead man lay there with the same expression of hopelessness and anxiety in his face that was there when for the last time he said, "It is too late."

Frank picked up a visiting card from the table in a corner of the room, and with the keenest sorrow he read the name of his old friend. Now he realized the meaning of the words, "It is too late."

Lord, Help Me

Matt. 15.25. *"But she came and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me."*

The story which follows is the actual experience of an English minister of the Gospel.

Ever since his student days he had owed a certain man the sum of one hundred dollars. One day this man called upon him and requested him to make immediate payment of the debt. "Next Monday I shall make the payment," said the pastor. Monday came, but the pastor could not procure the money with which to pay his debt. He therefore asked for an extension of time until the following Monday. It was granted.

The pastor then wrote down the names of several of his friends; from any one of these he thought he could borrow the necessary money. But in this expectation he was bitterly disappointed.—When a man wishes to find out how many real friends he has, let him try to borrow money from them.—The next day he made up a list, this time of friends less rich than the first. "Here I can certainly get twenty-five dollars, and there twenty-five," he said to himself. But when he made the attempt, he met with no more success than before. It was a bitter experience. He, the popular preacher, could not borrow one hundred dollars from his friends!

Friday came—he was on the point of giving up all hope. His word as a man of honor was at hazard, and he realized that his creditor would not scruple to take legal steps to collect the debt.

At his morning devotion he read the seventy-sixth Psalm, and this inspired him with new hope. He began to think of selecting a text for Sunday, but could find none—the one hundred dollars monopolized his thought. He tried to read, but the letters before his eyes ran together into the words, "one hundred dol-

lars." Wherever he turned his eyes, whether upon the ceiling, the walls, the faces of his children, or his wife, the same words appeared, "one hundred dollars." It was a terrible day.

Saturday came after a sleepless night. "You have so often preached to others about the power of faith; now you need to practice what you preach," said his wife to him. This did not improve the situation. He went about all day as if in a dream. The day passed just as the preceding day had passed. When the evening came, it was with a heavy heart that he ascended the stairs to his study. Three sermons to preach on Sunday and no text; one hundred dollars to pay on Monday and no money!

He fell upon his knees. "Lord, help me," he prayed. He could find no other words, but these words rose from the depth of his heart over and over again.

As he prayed, the thought suddenly occurred to him, "Here is my text for to-morrow." And since Sunday comes before Monday, he began to address himself, as best he could, to the task of preparing his sermons for the morrow. But it was impossible for him to find any other text than this: "Lord, help me."

While he was preaching on Sunday morning, so many thoughts came to him that he found it an easy matter to develop his text. Among other things which occurred to him and which he related from the pulpit was the story of a man who was the guardian of two orphan children. This man in his extremity yielded to the temptation to borrow for his own use some of the money entrusted to his care. Having once made a beginning, he repeated the process from time to time. Finally he had made away with all the property of the orphans. He then became addicted to drink, and at last died the death of an embezzler and a drunkard. If this man would have steeled his heart against temptation at the very beginning by praying, "Lord, help me," the outcome would have been quite different. Instead of losing his money, his good name, his peace of heart, and his life, his prayer would have been heard and he would have

received strength from God to overcome the temptation to do wrong.

Noon came — his sermon was not half finished. He continued to preach upon the same text in the afternoon and in the evening. It seemed to him that he could have spoken along this line for a whole week.

In this way the Lord helped him through the Sunday, and he felt convinced that the Lord would help him also on the following day.

When the evening services were ended, a young man remained to speak with the pastor. They entered the sacristy. The young man remained silent for some time. Finally he began to speak. "You know my mother, pastor," — he mentioned a name, and the pastor nodded his head affirmatively — "although you do not know me. When my mother died, she left all her property to me with the exception of two small sums of money. One of these sums I was to give to a poor woman with whom she was acquainted. 'The other sum,' said my mother, 'you are to give to the pastor. He is in need of financial assistance. Give him this sum of one hundred dollars.'

"I gave the money to the woman as my mother had directed, but the one hundred dollars which she told me to give to you, I kept for my own use. Now I can keep them no longer, they sear my conscience. I listened to your sermon this morning and heard your story of the dishonest guardian. Here is the money. Take it and forgive me."

The pastor was stunned, his whole body quivered. The Lord had helped him through the Sunday and had given him money for the Monday. He hastened home and laid the money upon the table before his wife. "Here they are! here they are!" he exclaimed. "Now I understand why I could not borrow any. God knew where the money was to be found. He has heard my prayer and has helped me; in Him will I put my trust, and Him will I praise as long as I live."

When this little prayer, "Lord, help me," comes from the heart, it is impossible to express in words what its power is.

2 Chron. 16.9. "For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

Are You Ready?

Her name was Catherine. She was a good, capable girl who attended to her duties promptly and conscientiously. She kept house for her father, who was a widower, and she gave her little brothers and sisters the best of care. Everybody said of her, "She is a fine girl."

One day she became sick. She certainly had no time to be sick, but she must take the time. Week after week passed by.

"It is terrible," she complained, "here I lie, and everything will be all topsy-turvy if I lie here any longer." But it was useless to complain; she could not leave her bed.

Her pastor had called on her several times. Catherine was not entirely pleased with his visits. "Why, it is just as if I were going to die," she said; and there were so many things for her to do that she did not have time to die.

But the pastor continued his visits. One day he said to her, "Well, Catherine, should you be willing to go away if the Saviour called you now?" She became pale as death. The pastor talked to her about the Father's house and the way which leads to it. She realized that what he said was true, but — she had no time to think of these things now. What would become of her father, her sisters and brothers? No, she certainly did not have time to die.

The pastor came again. He read to her the parable of the ten virgins. It seemed to her that his voice sounded so strange and dismal, exactly as if he were preaching a funeral sermon. "And they that were ready" — how solemnly and slowly he was reading! — "went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut."

"Be ready? — for what, then?" she asked herself. The pastor knelt and prayed. Almost unconsciously Catherine folded her hands. The pastor prayed, "Dear Lord God, let Catherine be ready when Thy Son comes. Do not take her away until she is ready and until she can meet Him with joy."

The sick girl lay there pale and still. When the pastor reached out his hand to bid her farewell, her eyes were filled with tears. "Dear Catherine," he said, "to-day is the day of grace, to-day God is to be found. The Lord calls. Listen to His voice. Perhaps your time is short." — He went away.

Catherine turned to the wall and wept. Then she lay a long time and stared straight ahead. But what was this? It seemed as if she could read the story of her whole life right there on the wall — it was so plain to her — and through it all sounded the words, "and they that were ready — the door was shut — shut — shut for ever!" Ready? Yes, she had always been ready to attack her everyday work with vigor — this was the very thing in which she had taken pride. But she was not ready to receive the Lord with joy.

She lay upon her bed and groaned, "They that were ready — Lord Jesus — the door was shut — dear Lord, do not take me away before I am ready."

Winter came and wore away. It was spring. Catherine was still confined to her bed. But she no longer complained. Her face was pale, very pale, but her eyes were radiant. It was one of the last days in May. Little Frederick, the pastor's son, came in with a bouquet from his mother. Catherine greeted him with a smile; she was so weak that it was an effort for her to speak.

She took his hand and said softly, "Heaven is my home. What blessed comfort! I shall remember to tell Jesus, little Frederick, how good you have been to Catherine, how you have sung for her and brought her flowers."

In the evening her father and the pastor were sitting by her bedside. The end was approaching. Her little brothers and sisters were weeping. "And they that were ready," whispered the dying girl. "I am ready — my Saviour — the door is open — open."

"It is well that she was spared from any lengthy suffering," said the people; "she was such a fine girl."

"God be praised that she was ready," said the pastor.

Matt. 25.10. "And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut."

It is Your Fault, Mother

A criminal lay bound in heavy fetters; on the morrow he was to be led to the scaffold. Then the door of the prison opens and his mother enters. As soon as the prisoner recognizes her, he stretches out his arm and exclaims, "It is your fault, mother. The first time I stole potatoes out of our neighbor's field, you laughed and said, 'That was well done, my son.' From that day I have continued to fall, deeper and deeper. It is your fault, mother."

* * *

A young girl became seriously concerned about the salvation of her soul. Her parents, who were worldly-minded, determined to do everything to drive such thoughts from the mind

of their daughter. They gave her fine clothes and jewels; they arranged dinner parties and balls. They tried everything, and finally they succeeded. The girl came to think that it was yet too early for her to think of her soul's salvation, later on in life would be time enough, — surely a young girl could not become a pietist.

Then she became ill, dangerously ill. The last day of her life she bade her mother bring her the dress she had worn at her last ball. Her mother did so. The girl looked at it in silence for some time. Then she burst into tears. "It has been paid for dearly, mother. *It is the price of my soul.*"

Before the new day dawned she was dead.

* * *

Christian Scriver tells us that when he was a little boy his mother would always pray with him as he went to bed, and would place her hand in blessing upon his head. Later on in life when temptations came upon him, it always seemed to him that he could feel his mother's hand upon his head. Then he would stop and say to himself, "Christian, do not grieve you Saviour; do not bring shame upon your mother." And so he would drive away and put to flight sinful thoughts and temptations.

* * *

At a social gathering it happened that a young physician was speaking of one of his patients. "And then these stupidly pious people," he said, "can not let her be in peace. They keep running in and out and preach and preach, until she is nearly beside herself. Fools! I have often told them that when we die, we die, and that is the end of it."

Among those who listened to the doctor's words was a young girl. Usually she was the gayest of the gay, but now she appeared very serious and thoughtful. Suddenly she began to speak. "Doctor, it is not true that our existence ends with

death. I myself am not a believing Christian and know very little about such things. But my mother was a true Christian, and I am convinced that her faith was neither imagination nor delusion. When I was a little child, she often drew me to her side, laid her hand upon my head and prayed that I might meet her in heaven. You may say what you will, but I insist that my mother's faith was not a matter of imagination. Two years ago she died, full of peace and joy. When she was about to die, she drew us children close to her, and with something of the glory of heaven already in her countenance she prayed that we all might meet again in heaven. Am I now to believe," said the girl with tears in her eyes, "that all this was mere delusion? Am I never to see my mother again? No, no, I cannot believe what you say."

She had spoken very warmly. Her brother attempted to silence her. "No, Ernest," she said, "let me speak. *I must defend my mother's faith and my mother's God.*"

And her mother's God became her God.

* * *

Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, the Danish missionary, tells us the following about his mother. "She died while he was yet a little child. Still he could remember that his mother gathered her children about her bed and said to them, "Dear children, I have a treasure for you, *a very great treasure.*" The eldest daughter asked, "Dear mother, where is this treasure?" The mother answered, "Seek it in the Bible. There you will find it. I have moistened its pages with my tears."

Shortly after saying this she died.

* * *

One Sunday morning eight young students were walking along the bank of a river in the vicinity of the city of Washington. They were on their way to the woods for the purpose of

spending the day there. They were in high spirits. In their pockets they carried bottles of wine and playing cards. They were certainly intent upon making a merry day of it. — Then the bells of a church in a neighboring village began to ring. One of the students, the very gayest of the little company, stopped to listen. “I have a good notion to go to church,” he said to the comrade who was walking beside him. This young man looked at him in a puzzled manner for a moment, then he shouted to the others who were a little in advance, “Listen and you shall hear something decidedly funny. George has made up his mind to become pious. He says he wishes to go to church.”

The others came back and surrounded George, and laughed and mocked. “You must not laugh,” said George seriously. “Please listen a moment and I shall tell you what the bells are saying to me.” There was something solemn about his voice which caused his comrades to listen to him.

“You must know, my friends, that about fifty miles from here I have a mother who prays. As far back as I can remember she has been confined to her bed. When I was about to leave home, she called me to her bedside and said, ‘My dear boy, I shall ever pray that my Saviour may come to be your Saviour also. Remember that every Sunday morning between ten and eleven o’clock, when the bells are ringing, your dying mother is praying the Lord to save you.’ I do not expect to see my mother again in this world — my father cannot afford to send me the necessary money for traveling — I do not even know whether she is still alive. Do as you wish, my friends, but I will not go with you to the woods. My mother’s prayer compels me to go to church.”

His comrades no longer laughed. They stood there with tearful eyes. George turned about and walked away toward the church. The others, one after the other, followed him. The bottles and cards were thrown away. — A great change came over them from that day; one by one they were all brought to

the Saviour and became devout Christians. And all this was the fruit of the dying mother's prayer.

* * *

A young man was employed upon an estate in Jutland. A great revival had just been taking place in this vicinity. Among those converted were the mother of this young man and also his employer. But the young man — Christian was his name — made fun of it all. They were not going to fool him with any such nonsense.

Then of a sudden he received word that his mother was seriously sick. He must hasten if he wished to see her before she died. This was a heavy blow to Christian, for although he disliked her religious faith he loved his mother very dearly. He hurried home. The message he had received was true; his mother was about to die. When she saw her son sitting by her bed, she gathered up her remaining strength and spoke earnestly with him about the one matter which concerned her most and for which she prayed most fervently — that her son might find his Saviour. She besought him not to resist the Saviour's love. But Christian remained hard and cold as he always was whenever his mother talked to him of his soul's salvation. Now her strength was all exhausted. With her eyes filled with tears she looked upon him, took his hand and said, "Farewell, then, Christian, *now we shall never see each other again!*"

"Never — again!" The words echoed within him. "Never again see my mother!" He realized that what his mother said was true. His mother was going to heaven — and he! — "Never again see my mother!" This was more than he could bear, he loved her so dearly. He must see her again.

He knelt at his mother's bedside and prayed to his mother's Saviour to save him also, to forgive his sin against Heaven and against his mother. He forgot everything else. He could not rise before he had received assurance that his sin was forgiven.

It was a struggle such as that of Jacob's of old which was being fought out in the simple cabin this night. And it ended in victory. When he arose from his knees he could say as Jacob said, "My life is preserved." His heart overflowed with joy and thanksgiving. But when he turned to his mother, he found that she had already passed away.

Listen, Someone is Knocking

In a city in Switzerland there lived a missionary. His way often led him by a beautiful, new villa not far distant from the railway station. He was not acquainted with the owner of the villa and knew about him nothing else than that he was very rich, very much opposed to religion, and very hostile to the faithful Christians who lived in that city.

One night the missionary had a dream. He dreamed that he was passing by the rich man's house. It was in the evening. At the door a stranger stood knocking, but no one opened the door. The missionary approached the stranger and said, "They are at home, for I saw a light through one of the windows." The stranger continued to knock, but no one opened the door.

Two hours later the missionary again passed by the house. What did this mean? The stranger still stood at the door and the light was still to be seen through the window. "The man of the house must be busy," said the missionary; "or perhaps he is entertaining guests. You must knock more loudly, he cannot have heard you." But no one came to open the door. "Come with me to my home," said the missionary, "you are welcome to stay with me, and to-morrow morning you may return to this house." — "No, I cannot go with you," said the stranger. "The

man of the house here is in great danger. I am very desirous of warning him this evening. To-morrow it will be too late."

In the meantime the heavens had been overcast with heavy clouds. It began to thunder and the rain soon fell in torrents. The missionary went again to the house of the rich man. It was now midnight. The remarkable stranger was still standing at the door. He knocked so loudly that it could be heard far and wide. But no response.

"You are assuredly an eccentric man. Why do you continue to stand here and knock when it is plain the man of the house does not wish to listen to you? You surely must understand that. Come with me" pleaded the missionary.

"No, I must gain admittance. Poor man, if he only realized how necessary it is!"

Again he knocked. Now the sound of approaching steps could be heard. The door was opened, and the man of the house appeared in the doorway. No sooner had he caught sight of the stranger, however, than he began to abuse him violently, calling him a roustabout who went about disturbing the peace of decent people.

The missionary was about to speak in defense of the stranger and repay the man in his own coin. But the stranger laid his hand upon the missionary's arm and said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth." "You are indeed a wonderful man," exclaimed the missionary. "The Lord is merciful," answered the stranger solemnly, "slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." In the meantime the door had been closed with a bang.

"Come, stranger," said the missionary, "come with me. You see that you can accomplish nothing by standing here any longer. Even if you persist, you will not be permitted to enter."

The stranger still tarried. With his eyes filled with tears he looked upon the closed door. The missionary was in the act of

taking the stranger's hand when the scales, as it were, fell from his eyes. He perceived that the hands and feet of the stranger were pierced.

It was the Lord Jesus.

"Dear Lord and Saviour," he exclaimed, "canst Thou endure such treatment as this?"

"Poor man, poor man! All too soon he will experience the wrath of My judgment, because he did not know the things which belonged to his peace."

* * *

The missionary awoke. There was a knock at his door. It was a messenger from the owner of the villa. This rich man was now at the point of death and desired to see the missionary.

When the missionary arrived at the villa, he found the rich man lying upon his bed and groaning, "Lord Jesus, save me! Have mercy upon me! Grant me but an hour to seek my soul's salvation! Lord, save me!" His wife knelt beside him and wrung her hands, and the children were standing by the bed, loudly weeping.

When the dying man perceived the missionary, he cried out, "Pray for me! Pray for me! It may be that God will hear you; me he will not hear."

The missionary knelt beside the bed. At the same moment the rich man breathed his last.

O that You Knew!

"Big James" often worked himself into a rage over the fact that there were people round about him who were stupid enough to walk every Sunday a distance of twelve miles to the church in the city simply to hear the city pastor preach. "They want to

be better than others, and so they run a dozen miles simply to hear a preacher! Why can't they stay at home and hear our own pastor? Isn't he good enough for them?" It was comical indeed. James always praised "our own pastor", but he never went to hear him. No, indeed, he had no time for that.

One Sunday morning, however, James takes his cane and sets off for the city. What now? Does he too intend to become pious? No, no; he is too shrewd for that. He has some matters to attend to in the city, and he has more time at his disposal on Sundays than on other days. Now he is on the way, — but not alone. From every direction people come, and all are going to the city; they are on their way to church. James is not pleased with their company. "Such fools," he growls, "here they go and wear out their soles to no purpose whatever." He knew why *he* was going to the city; there was some sense in that.— He arrived at the city and attended to his affairs. Then he directed his steps to a tavern — he would slake his thirst and then go home again. At every step he met happy, joyous men and women on their way to church, and the happier they appeared, the more James growled.

Suddenly he met one of his neighbors, who invited him to attend the services in the church. James shook his head angrily, but in reality he was curious to know in what way this city preacher surpassed all other preachers, for the people were pouring into the church in throngs. Since he happened to be in the city there could be no harm in entering the church for a few moments; he could, of course, leave as soon as he had heard enough.

No sooner thought than done. He forced his way in. All seats were occupied already, and behind him was a throng of people pressing forward for room. He was pushed and squeezed and before he was aware of it he was standing squarely before the pulpit so tightly hemmed about by others that he could not even move his arms.

There he stood — “Big James” — over six feet in height, his head towering above all the others about him. He wished that he were outside again. But that was simply out of the question.

The preacher entered the pulpit. What his text was that day, I do not know, but he described the sinner just as he is, and occasionally he looked seriously at James. This caused James to blush with shame, and this together with the heat pressed forth great drops of sweat upon his forehead.

And when the preacher began to tell about how many people in their zeal for earthly things forget their immortal soul, then James was certain that someone had informed the preacher that “Big James” was in the church to-day and that he was such and such a kind of a man. He could have sunk through the floor in shame. The description fitted him perfectly.

But then again the preacher told of the love of Jesus for sinners in such a fervent and touching way that the heart of the great, strong man became as wax within him. The tears from his eyes were mingled with the great drops of sweat from his brow. If he only could have hidden himself, bow down so that no one could see his face — but this was impossible, he must stand there and let the tears run their course.

And when the pastor finally made a fervent appeal to the unconverted to give their hearts to Jesus, James had to look up at the preacher once more. Yes, there was no mistake about it, the preacher was looking straight at him, only at him; indeed he even pointed at him as he brought his sermon to a close by reciting with soul-stirring solemnity the verse:

“Awake! the voice still soundeth,
’Tis now the accepted hour;
The grace of God aboundeth,
To save from sin’s dread power.
Make haste, implore Christ’s favor,
Thy sins confess, and bow
Before the Lord, thy Saviour,
The accepted time is now.

These words made a deep impression upon James. He left the church and set out slowly for home, — his thirst and the tavern were entirely forgotten. "What shall I do to be saved?" This was the question which now occupied his mind.

A restless week followed. James had never before been so unhappy, and he wondered what was to become of him.

The next Sunday James again set out for the city. He knew what he was seeking: peace and comfort for his restless heart. This time he came early enough to secure a seat in which he would not be so conspicuous. He listened with rapt attention to the sermon. The blessed comfort and peace of the gospel was abundantly set forth, but the only words he could take to himself were these, "You are a sinner; and the soul which sinneth shall die."

The week which now followed was worse than the preceding one. It couldn't be avoided — he must go and speak with the man who had robbed him of his peace of heart. Accordingly on the following Sunday, when he had attentively listened to the sermon but had received no comfort from it, he went to the pastor's house. He stood before the door. Why does he not enter? He dares not. He goes away and returns — goes away and returns. Finally he decides to postpone it till the following Sunday.

The following Sunday came. Now the anguish of his soul had reached its climax. He could endure it no longer. Again he stands before the pastor's door, but again he is afraid to enter. At last he makes a desperate decision — surely since he is called "Big James" he must be no coward. He enters the hallway, and after a moment he is ushered into the pastor's presence.

He was received with open arms. Hour after hour passed by. James had risen to go three different times so as not to take too much of the pastor's time, but the pastor for the fourth time compelled him to resume his seat.

His anxiety of soul gradually disappeared. And when at last

he bade the pastor farewell and descended the stairs there echoed deep within him the words, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." His step had been heavy when he entered the pastor's home; but on his homeward way his step was light and his heart joyous. Now "Big James" like the eunuch of Ethiopia could go on his way rejoicing, for now he had learned to know the riches of God's mercy in Christ Jesus.

The New Song

Ps. 40.3. *"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."*

There lived in the city of London a few years ago three sisters. Two of these sisters were believing Christians, but the third, who was the youngest, was always ready to ridicule the faith of her sisters and to mock at their "hanging of the head," as she called it. They couldn't go to *this*, and they couldn't take part in *that*, because it was contrary to their religion. No, she understood how to enjoy life in quite a different way. And so she enjoyed life to the full as she understood enjoyment, young and rich and beautiful as she was. But then a change took place.

One night she had attended a ball. The next forenoon, when she came downstairs to her sisters, she looked tired and pale. Generally she was very talkative on such occasions, would tell of the splendid time she had had, the dress this one and that one had worn, and how much she had danced. This she did because she knew it pained her sisters to hear it. But on this occasion she sat thoughtful and silent. Her sisters asked her if she was not well, or if she had a headache.

No, there was nothing the matter, she was perfectly well.—

The day passed. But in the evening twilight when her sisters persisted in asking her what the trouble was, she could no longer remain silent.

“Yes, I know that you will be glad to hear what I am about to say, and I am sure you will come with your moralizing sermons which are so extremely tiresome to me. But I shall tell you nevertheless. Let me say in advance, however, that I do not care about it at all. But it was strange indeed.

“Last night when I came home — you may imagine that it was a pleasant evening — O, what a good time I had! — but I was so tired. I fell asleep at once and had such a strange dream.

I seemed to be walking through a large city. But it was no ordinary city. The street upon which I was walking and all the houses were of gold, glittering, transparent gold. It was strangely light, but the light was not of the sun or of the moon. A large multitude of people were walking with me upon the street. Joy shone in their faces, and they looked upon me in a very friendly way. But it all seemed so strange and unfamiliar to me. I do not know why it was, but I wished that I were far away. I knew no one in the throng and I felt so lonely among them all.

They all walked in the same direction, and without any effort of the will I followed the stream. At the end of the street was a palace, more beautiful than all the other houses. It seemed like a single great diamond. As if driven by an invisible power I walked with the others up the steps and passed through the door of the palace. The people who entered were dressed in garments of various kinds and colors, but as soon as they were within the palace they disappeared through a side door, and when they came out again they were all clad in garments of white. All now entered a very large hall. O that I could fairly picture this hall to you! It was not gold, not marble, not crystal, but light, light, and again light. It was the sun without its

blinding sheen, the moon without its coldness. It was easy to enter, but I shuddered and turned away; it all seemed so strange and foreign to me.

Then a man approached me. He looked at me with eyes at once kind and piercing. "Why do you turn away?" he asked. I did not answer and he walked slowly away.

Suddenly another stood before me and looked at me in the same strange way. I wished to run away but I could not move from the place where I was standing. "Have you come so far — to no purpose? Remove your own garments and put on the garments of white."

"I do not *wish* to be clad in the garments of white, I do not wish to enter the great hall," I cried.

All who passed by looked upon me in a friendly way with curiously attractive expression, but I remained there sad and ill at ease. Finally a man again approached me. "Do not turn away," he prayed. "Whither will you go? Come in. We are in the happiest state, there is no other place so blissful as this." He extended his hand to me — I followed him.

A garment of white was cast over my shoulders. As in a dream I followed my companion into the great hall.

What I saw I cannot describe, what I heard I cannot repeat — it was a sea of light, of jubilation, of song.

Terrified I crept into a corner and endeavored to hide myself there. I was in the great hall of the blessed, but I was a stranger there.

Then the song like an ocean wave of melody filled the great hall. I stood in my corner and riveted my eyes upon the blessed.

Of a sudden the song became a cry of jubilee. One came in who was more beautiful than all the others. On him every eye was fixed, and every eye grew radiant as it gazed upon him. The song was all in his praise, for him alone.

One of the singers, observing me, approached me and said, "Why are you silent? Come and join us in the song." — A

pang of pain shot through my heart. I was filled with bitter sorrow — and bitter defiance. “Join you in the song?” I exclaimed. “I do not know the melody of your song, — I do not care to sing it.” He sighed deeply as he returned to his place.

At last he came to me, he who was the most beautiful of all and in whose honor the song was sung. I shuddered at the sight of him, the blood congealed in my veins, and my heart felt cold as ice. He began to speak and his voice was like exquisite music. “Why do you sit here so silent? All the others are so happy. Come and sing the song of my people.”

There was such an intensity of love in his words, — a heart of ice should have melted at the sound of them. But my heart was hard as a stone. “I *can* not, I *will* not sing that song; I do not know its melody.”

His countenance was changed in a moment, his eyes became as the lightning, and with a voice of thunder he cried, “What? You do not know the song of my people? How have you entered here?” — The earth opened under my feet and I sank into a flaming sea. — Then I awoke.”

The girl had been so absorbed in the story of her dream that she had forgotten all else. When she had finished there was silence, absolute silence in the room for some time.

Then her sisters embraced her lovingly. “Anna, dearest Anna, the Lord has sent this dream to you. In your dream you have seen the holy city, of which you may read in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, — the city which has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God lightens it and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. All who enter there are clad in garments of white.

“O dearest sister! seek the Lord while He may be found, that He may teach your lips the new song, the song of the redeemed. The song of which you did not know the melody is the song which we, your sisters, have begun to learn. Anna, do not forget your dream. Call upon the Lord. Now He is near to you.”

Anna sat silent. And during the following days she went about in a strange silence. But then she seemed to have forgotten the dream. She became the same indifferent, mocking girl she had been before, intent only upon worldly pleasures.

One morning she was found dead in her bed. Had she learned the melody of the song of the redeemed?

Hebr. 3.15. "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

Hail, Saviour and Redeemer!

He was a painter — *she* was his wife. *She* was a devout Christian — *he* was not. He loved her and she loved him; but he realized that she loved the crucified Saviour more than she loved him. *She* loved to hear the Word of God — *he* accompanied her to church for her sake. She read to him and talked to him about the Saviour — he listened and laughed. She became pale and silent, more pale and more silent day by day, but he did not notice it. She lay upon her death-bed — he sat close beside her and she nestled her head in his bosom. But her last dying glance was directed to the picture over her bed, the picture of the Crucified One.

Several years passed. He could never forget her. He had tried, he had sought forgetfulness in dissipation, but in vain. Now he was seeking forgetfulness in hard work. He was engaged upon a painting to be placed above the altar of the new church in the city. It was to represent Christ before the council of the Jews. In order that he might the better feel the situation to be set forth in the picture, the painter had read through his wife's New Testament, *her* Testament with the many passages which she had underlined. The painting was now nearly fin-

ished, — the faces of the Jews filled with hate — the sly, proud Pharisees — the well-fed Sadducees — one thing only remained: the figure of the Saviour. There now came vividly to his mind the recollection of an episode in his life while his wife was still living. He had been engaged to paint the scene of the Crucifixion. She had come to him, laid her hand upon his arm, and looked into his eyes with such an anxious, prayerful look as only she was capable of. “Do not do it,” she whispered. “Why not?” he inquired. “Because His portrait can be painted only be one who is a devout believer in Him. I love you dearly. Your hands must not profane His holy body.” On that occasion he had laughed at her, — now he did not laugh. It seemed to him that her hand was again laid upon his arm whenever he was about to paint the figure of the Saviour. It seemed as if he could hear her whisper, “Do not do it. Do not do it.” But he had undertaken the work. It must be finished. Time was rapidly passing. O that he had never undertaken the task!

He began to paint — a beautiful human figure was soon taking shape under his skilful hand. But the face — the face! “No, do not do it” — the words sounded again in his ears. He could not, he was not a devout believer in the Man of Sorrows. Day after day, night after night the neighbors heard him pacing to and fro in his studio; but there was one thing which no human being heard — what passed between him and One other, between him and his God, his wife’s God. In the morning, when his housekeeper brought him his breakfast, she would often find him after a sleepless night sitting before his painting, which remained unfinished, or bowed over a book — *her* book — yes, sometimes she would find him upon his knees — him, the hard, proud, self-sufficient man.

The church was completed — the painting likewise. The day of dedication came. All eyes in the church, which was filled to overflowing, were directed to the painting.

But there was a curtain over it, which was not to be removed

until the singing of the psalm after the sermon. This was in accordance with the wish of the painter, and the painter himself had chosen the psalm.

The sermon was ended. The organ began the psalm, "Hail, Saviour and Redeemer!" The veil was drawn aside. All eyes were upon the painting. There they stood, the vengeful Pharisees with clenched hands, the haughty councillors, the false witnesses. But in the center of the painting — every eye was attracted to it — stood the Son of God and of Man; it seemed as if the light were radiating from His head and entire figure. His one hand pointed downward to the gilded inscription under the painting, "Thou sayest that I am a king." His other hand pointed upward to His place at the right hand of God. It seemed as if His eye were seeking every individual in the audience: "Wounded for *your* transgressions, bruised for your iniquities — do you not see this, child of man?" It seemed as if a question were upon his lips: "If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" — — But where was the painter? There he was, down by the pillar, and his voice rang loud and clear, "Hail, Saviour and Redeemer!" Suddenly, however, his voice lost its strength and became fainter and fainter, and in the last verse of the psalm at the words, "Yes, I believe in the wonder of the cross," it became hushed entirely. He sank down at the pillar and his head was bowed, but on his face there was a look which expressed more plainly than words could have done the assurance: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Now *he* and *she* were face to face with Him who is the fairest of all.

“Withstand!”

In southern France near the city of Aigues-Mortes are the ruins of an ancient citadel, which is called the Tower of Constance. It was built by Louis IX., and it was from this place that he set out upon his crusade. During the reign of Louis XIV. and his successors, the citadel was used as a prison for the Protestants who would not deny their faith. A vast number of women and children were forced to spend many, many years behind those massive iron doors, while the men were sent as slaves to the galleys. The unfortunate prisoners were exposed to every species of suffering, and the absence of proper food together with the wretched treatment in general caused the death of a large number of victims. In winter the sharp, cold wind from the sea pierced the old cracked walls; in summer noxious mists from the adjacent marshes did the same.

Among the prisoners was a young girl of noble birth. She was arrested while attending a Protestant service. She was dragged away from her parents and condemned to prison for life. Sometime after her disappearance, her mother determined to see her daughter once more, even though the attempt should cost her own life. She succeeded in reaching the base of the tower. Here she began to sing as loudly as she could one of the Protestant psalms. As soon as the tones of the psalm reached the ears of the prisoners, they joined her in the singing with great joy. The mother then cried, “Suzanne, Suzanne!” Immediately a youthful voice answered, “Mother, mother!”, and through one of the portholes the mother caught a glimpse of her daughter. It was the last time that mother and daughter saw each other in this life.

There was another girl, whose name was Marie Durand. She was but fifteen years old when she was imprisoned, and she spent thirty-eight years in the citadel.

It would have been an easy matter for these unfortunate prisoners to regain their liberty; all that was required was a denial of their faith. A single word would have opened the doors of their prison. But this word they did not utter and could not utter. Why not?

On the floor of the prison there is an inscription, legible to this day. It was engraved upon one of the stones by Marie Durand with an embroidery needle. It was an undertaking which required much patience, but she had time enough at her disposal — thirty-eight years! “*Résistez!*” it says.—Withstand!

I Pet. 5.8, 9. “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom withstand steadfast in your faith.”

The Lost Bible

It is in a village in the northern part of Germany. On the outskirts of the village is an old, simple dwelling. Within all is still. A dying woman is lying upon her bed and a young man is kneeling beside her.

“Farewell, Karl,” whispers the dying woman. “Your father has been waiting for me for fifteen years. Now I am to leave you. You love me, but you also love the world. For the last time I beseech you: Come back to your God. When you have buried me, sell everything. But one thing you must keep — I want you to promise it — my Bible. It is, as you know, an heirloom in our family. Your forefathers brought it with them from Bohemia when they were driven from their homes because of their faith. All their names are written in it. You are the last. Do not part with your Bible. Promise me.”

Weeping he made the promise. O that he could have undone

the sorrow he had caused his mother! But now it was too late. When he again looked upon his mother, she was dead.

His mother was buried, and Karl was now making a journey. All that he brought with him of his mother's possessions was the Bible. It was a large family Bible in thick leather binding with brass clasps. On its first page were inscribed the names of his forefathers who had remained steadfast in their faith. The Bible was so large that there was scarcely room for it in his knapsack. When Karl placed it there, it was with no kindly eyes that he looked upon it. But he could not leave it. In the evening at the tavern he took it out of his knapsack and tried to read. But when his comrades saw what kind of a book it was, they began to laugh and make fun of him. If it had been a book of adventure or a love story, they would have considered it proper enough. But the Bible! That was too comical!

Karl laid the book aside, very much embarrassed. If it had not been for the memory of his mother, he would never again have placed it back in his knapsack.

A year passed.

Two young men had been brought into the same room in one of the large hospitals in Hamburg. The one had been wounded in a drunken brawl in a tavern, the other while at work had fallen from a scaffolding. There they now lay side by side. For a long time they were unconscious, but both recovered consciousness at about the same time. Then the nurse must tell them how they happened to be there and how it had been possible to bring their belongings to the hospital. The one immediately grabs for his knapsack and utters an oath when he finds that his pocketbook is gone. His comrades left nothing in it except some rags and — a book. With another oath he throws the book upon the floor. "Why should I keep that trash?" — The other man asked, "What's that?" "O, it is nothing but a Bible! It has always proved a nuisance to me." "Give it to me," said the other man. "Yes, gladly. I shall be glad to be

rid of it." He hid his face in his pillow as if he wished to forget it all. The nurse gave the book to the other man. A few weeks afterward both beds were vacant. In the journal of the hospital was the record: "William B.; entirely recovered; has gone to the mission institute in Moravia." "Karl N.; entirely recovered; has gone to sea."

Years passed. Far up in Greenland, where snow and ice cover the ground for ten months of the year, is a Moravian mission station, Lichtenfels by name. At this place a missionary gathers the Eskimos together and preaches the gospel to them. One day a number of Eskimos were returning home from a fishing expedition. In their long, narrow kayaks they picked their way among the blocks of ice to land. At once they hurried to the missionary and reported that off the shore, not far from the long reef of rocks, a whaling ship was in distress. Immediately a large fire was built on the shore, that the ship might be directed into the harbor. The missionary sprang into a boat, and three Eskimos followed him. The Lord helped them; after great exertion they reached the ship, were taken on board, and piloted the ship safely to shore. In the meantime, however, a sailor had fallen to the deck from the main mast. Now he lay moaning and bleeding upon the deck.

The Eskimos carried him into the missionary's house and laid him in the missionary's bed. It was not possible to save the sailor's life. During the entire night the missionary sat by his bedside.

The dying man opens his eyes. The missionary addresses him and asks him if he is prepared to meet his God. At the same time he brings forth his Bible, an old leather-bound book. But when he opens the brass clasps and is about to read, the dying man jumps up, stares at the book with an expression of horror upon his face, and exclaims, "Take it away! That is *my* book! I have thrown it away. I dare not look upon it again. Mother, you are calling — I can no longer hear you — too late!"

He fell back upon the bed and was dead.

Hebr. 10.31. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The Bible that was Found

Jer. 15.16. *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart."*

There was formerly in Paris, before the year 1789, a state prison called the Bastille. Many criminals and also many innocent persons were confined here for long periods of their lives. Among the innocent prisoners was an evangelical minister of the gospel by the name of Julian.

The walls of the cell in which he was confined were covered with inscriptions made by those who had occupied the cell before him. Despair and trust in God, faith and unbelief, love and hate had inspired these inscriptions. All names, however, had been erased; the prisoner was to know of his predecessors nothing but their sufferings.

Upon one of the stones the following remarkable words had been inscribed: "Hic jacet anima mea," that is, in English, "Here lies my soul."

The minister for a long, long time was puzzled as to the signification of these words. Suddenly the thought occurred to him that possibly behind the stone there was something hidden which had been the chief treasure of a prisoner in former times. He examined the stone and found that it was loose. He therefore lifted out the stone. Behind it was a cavity, in which he found a large book and a lead pencil. The book was an old Bible, bound in leather. Quite likely the Bible had belonged

to a Huguenot. It was filled with annotations, not only the blank pages, but in the margins and between the lines, everywhere.

On the white pages before the text, the writing was in ink.

"To-day, June 16, 1680, I was married in the church at Charenton. The pastor, the venerable Jean Claude, gave me this book and impressed upon me that I must keep it through good days and bad. This, God helping me, I am fully determined to do.

"To-day, August 18, I was installed as pastor in Meaux (near Paris) and promised before the Lord that I would faithfully adhere to the pure doctrine and live a holy life to the extent that the Lord bestows upon me the power so to do.

"To-day, August 17, 1681, a daughter was born to me. May God give her His blessing.

"To-day, September 1, 1683, a son was born to me. God bless him. The times are bad. It is said that the king (Louis XIV.) is very bitter against us evangelicals.

"To-day, June 5, 1684, my dear mother died. Now I shall bring my brother to live with me. In all the world he has no one but me.

"Yesterday, October 15, 1685, a proclamation was made revoking the Edict of Nantes. May the Lord show us whether we are to obey it. The clergy has been ordered to leave the country.

"To-day, May 7, 1686, a second daughter was born to us. God bless her. The church is under a cross. The death penalty has been decreed against all preachers who show themselves in France. I have not fled and I shall not flee. God keeps me here through my little brother. He says that he is not afraid and that he wishes to dedicate his life to the same holy service."

Here ended the portion of the narrative which was written in ink. The rest was written with pencil and in very small

letters. It seemed evident that the writer felt from the beginning that he would be unable to get any other paper.

"To-day, July 13, 1688, after spending fourteen months in the Bastille, through the goodness of God this book came into my hands. It was brought to me by one of the prison keepers whom my friends have won over to our side. But the man was not willing to say anything to me. All day I have been searching through the book, hoping to find some written message there; and now I am very sad, for I found nothing. I have read to the beginning of John 14, 'I shall not leave you fatherless.'

"May 15, 1689. To-day two years have passed since I was put in prison. I believed that I was to be executed, just as many others whose joy it was to die for the Lord. But it seems that they wish to have no further executions in the capital. I have been told that I may regain my liberty whenever I please, provided that I deny my faith. Accordingly I shall die here. If I only could learn something of my wife, my children, and my brother! But I know nothing of them, not even whether they are yet alive.

"August 20. In my cell I have found a cavity, which presumably someone of my predecessors has begun. For two months I have been working at enlarging it so that I may place my Bible in it. I am in constant dread that it will be discovered and taken from me. These enemies of God do not know that I am not alone. I have found the mark which my wife made the last evening we read the Bible together. I have wept much, but the dear God has comforted me."

He then goes on to tell of the endeavors on the part of Bishop Bossuet of Meauz and Bishop Fenelon of Cambray to convert him to the Catholic faith.

"November 12. They have sent another to me. He was so mild and friendly that I at once asked him if he were not Fenelon. This pleased him much, for it was Fenelon. He addressed me in so kindly a manner at the beginning that I

delayed answering. But when we began to discuss the deeper questions I saw that he was a Papist as much as any of the others.

“October 30, 1702. For eleven years I have written nothing and read nothing. I was removed to another cell, but fortunately my Bible was preserved in its hiding-place. I had imagined that their kindly overtures would be followed by harsher measures. And I was not mistaken. When they were unable to convince me with arguments they tried to do so by force. To begin with they placed me in a terrible place, so unsanitary that I do not understand how a human being could live there. In this place I spent six weeks. Then I was moved to another cell, so small and dark that it was nearly as bad as the preceding one, but yet it was possible to live in it. Here I remained for eleven years. Once they opened the door in order to conduct me to mass, and when I refused to attend such a service I was told that I should no longer be allowed to take any walks in the prison court. Often I was in such a state of agitation and anguish that I prayed God to take me from this world. This was a great sin. Now He has again strengthened me by His Word. — Oh! my wife and my children! I wonder if they still think of me. Do they pray for me as I pray for them? I should perish through sorrow were it not for the hope that I shall see them again in Paradise. As often as I mention their names my keepers say to me, “Abjure your faith first.” Satan knows that this is the only point where it is possible for him to lead me into temptation. O God! Perhaps they have brought up my children in the religion which persecutes the Lord’s faithful servants! Perhaps they have taught them to curse their father! O God, take these thoughts from me, they crush my heart. And my brother, my poor brother, who wished to be a minister of the gospel, what have they done with him?

“April 12, 1709. During the past winter the cold has been very intense. I thought I should die of the cold, but then they

provided a little heat for me. It is reported that many have frozen to death, and the crops have been destroyed. The hand of God rests heavily upon this unfortunate land. I have been aging rapidly during the past winter. I shall soon be fifty-four years old, and I have spent twenty-two of these years in the Bastille.

“December, 1712. It is said that the king has seen nearly his whole family die. God is avenging the blood and the tears of our people. Still—I could wish that I had not written these lines. God alone knows the reason for His deeds.

“July, 1714. God be praised, I am beginning to die unto this world. If I were told that I was now to be released, it would make no great impression upon me. I am content to remain here yet a short time longer and to meet in heaven those who were my family here upon earth.

“September, 1715. The king is dead! His reign lasted seventy-two years. Now he would, perhaps, be glad to exchange positions with me. It is said that the new king is but five years of age, and that the Duke of Orleans is the regent. Possibly this may improve matters.—Such is our poor heart! I said just now that I was dead unto the world, and now I surprise myself with talking about hope.

“January, 1716. The hope was vain. But, thanks be to God! I need it no longer. I bow to His will. Soul and body I commit into His hand. It is said that our poor congregations are not suffering as much affliction now as during the reign of the late king.

“March, 1717. I have been visited by a young man who told me that he had been imprisoned in the Bastille for a small offense which he had committed through thoughtlessness. He pitied me very much, not because I had suffered so much in the prison, but because I clung with such tenacity to my faith. All religious questions were in his opinion but matters of indifference and of no real importance to sensible and intelligent people. But

he soon realized that I had no ear for such talk. I should sooner admit that light and darkness are identical than admit that heresy and truth are matters of indifference.

“July, 1723. I cannot understand that I am still living. For four years I have been very feeble, but still there is oil in the lamp. But I do believe that the end is not far distant.

“December, 1724. The persecutions are beginning again. A cruel proclamation has been made. The governor of the prison was unmerciful enough to show it to me. So I am to die without the comfort of knowing that my brethren in the faith are permitted to live in peace. But God’s will be done!

“May, 1725. It is probable that I now write for the last time. There is no further space in the book. My hand trembles and it grows dark before my eyes — I can scarcely distinguish the letters. Now I do not wish that I had never been brought to this place. For thirty-eight years God has preserved me from the dangers and temptations of the world. He has given me nearly two-thirds of my life to prepare myself for His coming. I feel that I can now more easily than before forgive the enemies of the gospel. They have proved to be the instruments of His mercy toward me. Oh! I wish sincerely to forgive them freely and fully. I believe that God will not call me to Himself before He has taken away the last bit of hate and bitterness from my heart. God be with my children, with my brother, if they still live, — and with my poor wife, though she may already be with God in heaven awaiting me. Now I may hope soon to see her again — she is of about the same age as I. God forgive me all my sins for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ! I have often sinned against Him. It took me a long time to learn to give myself wholly to Him. And the old man — my sinful nature — is so ready to come to life again. God keep me to the end through His grace! Amen.

“June. Once again I wish to see my old Bible. But I can no longer read, and I cannot see what I write.

"Shall I succeed in hiding my dear Bible again? I do not know. But upon him who some time in the future shall find it I invoke peace and blessing from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour. I kiss my Bible....I kiss it yet again....Farewell....Farewell....I shall read the Word no more....I shall soon hear it from the lips of God."

The last words were scarcely legible. Tears had nearly obliterated the words penned with a trembling hand. — Neither could Julian restrain his tears.

In the whole story there was not a word in praise of the author himself. Even his name was not there. How often the tempter must have appeared to him and whispered in his ear, "Save thyself!" But not a word of all these struggles — all these victories. And who had inspired him with such faithfulness? His Bible. It had become his friend. He kissed it when he could no longer read it. It had become his soul's chief treasure.

"Hic jacet anima mea."

How She Knew

A devout Christian father was sitting at the deathbed of his little daughter, six years of age. The end was near at hand and the father's heart was almost broken. "Now you are about to leave us, my child; tell me, are you afraid?" — "No, father, I am not afraid at all. I am going to Jesus, and I know that He loves me," she replied. "How can you be so sure of it, my child?" — The little girl could not understand why her father asked such a strange question. She sat up in bed and looked upon him with her large, deep eyes. Then she extended her

arms and said, "That is the way He hung upon the cross for me once." At the same moment she sank back upon her pillow, her eyes closed, and her heart ceased to beat.

Her Experience

It was confirmation day. The old, devout washerwoman from the house in the rear of the yard was conversing with the cabinet-maker's wife, who lived in the fine, large house which fronted on the street. "Yes, it is quite a problem to know what to do with Anna," said the washerwoman. "She can go far both in the one direction and in the other. It would be well if she could find employment among really devout people." But a good word does not always fall upon good ground. And it did not so fall in this case. Anna's mother doted upon her daughter and was proud of her appearance and figure. No finery was too good for her. "Pshaw! It can't be more dangerous for her than for other girls. There is surely no harm in their having a good time now and then. But some people have become so pious that they have entirely forgotten what they were and what they did in their own youth. And furthermore you need not bother yourself about a situation for Anna. She has already been offered a position — and a good one at that — in the wholesale house over here on the corner. Goodbye."

The cabinet-maker's wife gave a toss to her head and went away. The old washerwoman sighed. She was very fond of Anna. Ever since Anna was a wee little girl she had been in the habit of visiting the old washerwoman every now and then. The heart of a child is always plastic and tender, and Anna's heart was no exception to the rule. It might, however, prove

to be the shallow soil in which the good seed grows for a season but cannot take root owing to the rock beneath, and in consequence is soon withered by the sun.

Now Anna was confirmed. A dress of the most recent style — a necklace with a gold cross — gloves — an embroidered handkerchief — a bouquet of flowers. Her parents could afford to provide her with all these things, so why shouldn't she have them?

Still Anna was not untouched by the solemnity of the day. In the afternoon she paid a visit to her dear old friend. She sat for a time in silence, listening to the old woman; and then she recited to her the Bible verse which the pastor had given her, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26.41). The old woman besought her to cherish these words in her heart; there were so many things which tempted us, and Anna in particular needed to be on her guard against vanity and coquetry.

"But Anna!" her mother was standing at the door. "Are you sitting here, when there are so many in your home wishing to congratulate you?" Anna must needs accompany her. Yes, there were indeed many. And all must examine her presents, and all exclaimed, "O, how beautiful! How fine you will look in this! You are surely born under a lucky star, Anna." But there was no one who said a word about the significance of the day. In this way the day passed.

And so Anna entered upon her work at the wholesale house. Sunday afternoons she was to be free to visit her parents. This her mother had insisted upon.

But she couldn't, of course, be expected to stay all afternoon with her parents, and the old washerwoman was naturally nothing to a young, beautiful girl. After a while she began to frequent other places and seek more congenial society. In these new places and with her new companions she spent all her spare time in dance and frolic. Her company was eagerly sought by

the young people, since she was a very pretty girl. But the downward way is a rapid way, and such was the case also in the present instance. — Her employers could not for any length of time be satisfied with such a girl as this. That she might be lost was no concern of theirs, but that she spent her evenings as she did and neglected her work as a consequence, — this they objected to. And then, too, it takes money to be finely dressed — and gradually she began to use for her own purposes some of the firm's money entrusted to her for the purpose of making purchases for the firm. This was discovered, and she was discharged. She had forgotten to watch and pray, and so she yielded to temptation.

But she stopped to think and to search her own soul. In whom should she now confide and where should she turn for help? Her companions and her parents could be of no help to her, of this she was certain — but her old friend, the washer-woman! To her she went, and there she wept and confessed her sin. The dear old woman's tears fell in sympathy with the girl, and she prayed for her and said, "Jesus receives sinners. He received him who called himself 'the chief among sinners,' and He will not reject you." Every day Anna visited the old woman and they read the Word of God together and prayed together. Anna often said, "Do you believe He will receive such an one as I?" and then she would lay her head upon the old woman's bosom and sob. — But one day she came into the room happy as a child. "Now I believe it," she exclaimed. "Now God has given me assurance of His mercy." Now, indeed, she was truly confirmed, and the Holy Spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was a child of God.

What He was Good for

In the valleys of the Alps in northern Italy live the Waldenses. Although surrounded by Catholics, they have maintained their evangelical faith for centuries. Now they are protected by the arm of the law, but it was not always so. During the past centuries they were made to suffer much for the sake of the gospel of Christ, because they would not give up their Bible. The traveler who in our own day spends a night in any of the villages of the Waldensian valleys will hear at midnight the cry of the watchman: "It is twelve o'clock. The peace of God be upon us. Blessed be the memory of Peter Bannerman." This has been the cry of the watchmen for many generations. The visitor will naturally be surprised and will ask who Peter Bannerman was. And every child in the valleys can tell him. It is the first thing which fathers and mothers tell to their little children. It is a story which the children hear repeated over and over again.

It was during the time of the persecutions. The Waldenses were pressed upon all sides. Step by step they were compelled to retreat towards the north from valley to valley. Finally they came to the Chamonix valley. If the enemy now should continue to pursue them, the only alternative left them would be to cross the Alps into Switzerland or to die. All preparations were made for the perilous crossing of the mountains in the event of the approach of the enemies. And the enemies came. One day the soldiers came rushing down into the valley, — now they had finally reached their prey, the Waldenses could no longer escape them. The Waldenses offered the appearance of yielding. In the evening they went to bed as usual. Soon the stillness of death reigned throughout the village, broken only now and then by the boisterous cries from the church and schoolhouse where the officers of the invading army were drinking and carousing.

But when the darkness of the night had enveloped the valley, the Waldenses one by one crept from their houses up the mountain side to a cave. Here they fell upon their knees, and their aged pastor prayed God, who had formerly led the Children of Israel, now to be with them on their journey.

Then they set out upon their perilous journey over the Alps. The pastor led the way; after him came the women and children; and last of all the men, ready at any moment to defend themselves against an attack from the rear, should the enemy learn of their departure and pursue them.

More than one little child was buried in the snow whenever the fugitives halted. More than one of the aged and infirm must be left behind under the protection of one able-bodied man in the hope that they later on would be enabled to resume their journey.

When the sun cast its first rays over the mountains, the soldiers were maddened as they saw the captives who had escaped them moving like a long, black line over the snow up on the top of the mountains where it seemed that hardly a chamois could gain a foothold.

Among the little band of fugitives was Meta Bannerman, the widow of one of the best sons of the valley. Her husband had fallen in one of the first battles, leaving his wife and two children to the care and protection of his brethren in the faith. One of these children was a mere infant, the other was a boy six years of age, a poor, misshapen cripple.

The mother wrapped up her little, sleeping child as securely as she could and pressed it to her bosom. It was bitterly cold. For many hours they marched through deep snow. It was hard even for the strongest to persist. Every time they halted, Meta Bannerman saw little frozen bodies taken from the arms of weeping mothers and buried in the snow. She pressed her own child all the harder to her bosom.

But the little bundle in her arms began to grow more heavy.

She could scarcely restrain a cry when she realized the reason. She continued to hold her precious burden pressed close to her breast. She could not let go of it, she could not let the others discover that her child was dead. She could not leave her child there in the snow. No, she must carry it — drag it if need be — until they had crossed the mountains, until they had reached the refuge they were seeking. There she would bury it in the burying ground beside the church. Then she would go every day and visit the grave of her little child.

But her son, the little Peter, saw the look of despair in his mother's face. He thought that she was tired. "Mother, can't I carry little Dora a while?" he asked. "Then you could rest yourself a little."

"Be quiet, my child," whispered his mother and pressed the dead child yet more closely to her breast.

Finally they had reached the top of the mountain. The fugitives began to descend on the other side, a matter still more perilous than climbing up. They came to a little hollow between the rocks. Here they were protected somewhat from the keen, biting wind; and here they stopped to rest a few moments and to thank the Lord, who had brought them so far forward on their journey.

Now the poor mother could no longer conceal her loss. The aged pastor took the child from her and placed it with some others who had likewise succumbed to the hardships of the journey. — There was now left to Meta Bannerman only her poor, deformed boy, but upon him she henceforth concentrated a double love.

The fugitives reached Switzerland and were received with open arms. Here they received shelter and food. But they were as yet far from secure. The men, both old and young, must be on guard day and night at the mountain passes, in order to check the advance of the enemies in case they should continue their pursuit. Even the young boys were made to render service.

They climbed up into places inaccessible to the grown men, that they might keep watch and also convey information from one division to another.

But little Peter Bannerman alone could render no service. He could not climb in and out among the great, craggy rocks and over the glaciers. He must stay at home. His mother endeavored to comfort him with the assurance that he could pray for those who were up in the mountains, and that was no little service. And little Peter prayed, but still — O, how he wished that he might do something more!

In this way days and weeks passed. Christmas was at hand. The widow had nothing to give her poor, crippled boy. But on Christmas eve she had got a couple of pennies for him. These she gave him with permission to buy with them whatever he wished.

The boy set out into the village. Now and then he would stop to peep in through the frosted windows that he might see the happy, fortunate people within. But when he saw the children, healthy and strong, engaged in play, his eyes filled with tears. Why should he be such a poor, crippled creature? — Over there at the burgomaster's, the whole house was radiant with light. He must peep in at the window. In the room there were a large number of children playing with tin soldiers. One of these tin soldiers had broken in two, and when a little girl picked it up, one of the other children cried, "Throw the tin soldier away. He is good for nothing — just like Peter Bannerman."

O what a sharp pain pierced the poor boy's heart at these words! All his joy was quenched. He must go home — home to his mother, and tell her what cruel words he had heard. Continually the words sounded in his ears: "Good for nothing — just like Peter Bannerman."

Even in his dreams the words would trouble him. — So it came about one cold, starlight night — he could not sleep — he

must go out to the other boys upon the mountains. He arose. His mother did not hear him as he left the house and set out to climb the mountain. As he proceeded he dreamed that he was not a cripple, but he soon awoke to the bitter reality. The cracks and fissures in the mountain which the other boys could easily have jumped across he must crawl through and over on all fours. But nevertheless he ascended higher and higher. Over there was a great heap of brushwood and boughs. He knew what it was for. Such heaps of wood, which could be made to burn quickly and brightly, had been made round about the mountains. At this heap, curiously enough, he found no one on guard, although he knew that a guard was always stationed at every such heap. The first guard who saw the enemy approach would set fire to his heap, thereupon the next guard would do the same, and so on round about the mountains to call the men to battle.

His strength failed him, he could go no further. He sat down exhausted, leaned his head upon a convenient bough, and fell asleep. He dreamed that the heap of wood had been set on fire, was now a blazing beacon, and that someone was crying, "Good for nothing — just like Peter Bannerman."

Suddenly he leaped up. What was this? His ear could detect no sound, but over there by the rocks was a black mass which grew larger and larger as he gazed at it. There could be no mistake about it, a large number of men were slowly and silently approaching. It must be the enemy! With staring eyes he watched them coming nearer and nearer. He wished to cry out but could not. Hastily he seized the tinderbox lying in readiness beside the heap of wood and branches and started a fire. A bright flame shot up and almost instantly the beacon was in full blaze. The boy now ran away, forgetful of the fact that he was a cripple. As he ran he saw one beacon after the other blaze forth upon the mountain side.

But the enemy had discovered him. He heard them calling

him, angered that their approach had been discovered and proclaimed. He stood at the side of a wide cleft in the rock. How was he, a cripple, to overcome this obstacle? He *must* overcome it, he *must* give the alarm down there in the village, where all were sleeping. Close behind him was the enemy. He made a wild leap and gained the other side. Even as he did so, an arrow pierced his side; but he sped on. It seemed that he had been strengthened for the moment with superhuman powers.

The alarm was given. The whole village was aroused and soon in commotion. Peter sank down, bleeding, at his mother's door.

Great was the disappointment of the enemy. Where they had expected to find a village asleep, they were met by a body of armed and resolute men. A bloody battle ensued, in which hundreds of men were slain although the battle was a brief one. Hundreds of men also were plunged over the precipices into the yawning abyss below.

When the victory was won, all hastened to the house of the widow. There they gathered about the boy who was dying. His eyes were beaming with joy. He seized his mother's hand and whispered, "They can never say again: 'Good for nothing — just like Peter Bannerman.' Can they, mother?"

How he had reached the top of the mountain and how he had returned again, he could not himself explain. The only thing he knew was that he had prayed and that his prayer had been heard. The blood was flowing from his wound, only a few minutes of life remained for him. The aged pastor bent over him. "My splendid boy," said the venerable man, while the tears were coursing down his cheeks, "your mother shall want for nothing. Is there anything else that you wish?" The boy smiled and said, "Let the Waldenses never forget that the Lord saved them through a poor cripple, who was good for nothing." With these words he passed into the sleep of death.

And the Waldenses have not forgotten it. When a mother

sits and tells her children of their faithful forefathers she does not forget Peter who saved his people. And many a little boy and girl in the Waldensian valleys then wish, "O, that I might some day be of service to my people and be good for something — just like Peter Bannerman!"

On the Brink of Ruin

It is an old story, and still ever new. — Near the village lived a small farmer with his wife. They had an only daughter, a child of remarkable beauty. The wife often said to her husband, "Look closely at her. Doesn't she look as if she were of gentle birth, her complexion is so fine and white? Her hair glitters like gold, her cheeks are as red as the roses in the doctor's garden, and her eyes! — just look at her eyes!" The husband agreed with his wife — as he usually did. "Yes, Anna is a beautiful child, much too delicate for simple folks such as we are. It is almost a pity that she must eat from the same dishes that we do, and wear herself out in the hard, rough work that has fallen to our lot; but it cannot be helped."

Several years passed. Then one summer a painter came to the village. From morning till night he worked at his painting. And he painted the most absurd things, — the shoemaker's old peat-shed and the constable's old white-faced horse. One day he asked permission of Anna's parents to paint her picture. She was such a pretty girl and he would pay her two dollars for sitting for the portrait. Well, yes, why not? Two dollars was money, to be sure. While he was painting her portrait, he flattered her. But finally he was through and she received her two dollars. "Farewell, good people," he said. "Farewell, my

pretty child. It is a pity that you must wear yourself out here engaged in such menial labor."

These words took root in Anna's heart. She was at that time sixteen years of age. She now became wilful and capricious, and began to put on airs. Nothing would do but she must go to the next fair in the city to spend her two dollars. When she returned she brought with her a mirror. This was in the good old times, and there had never been a mirror in Anna's home before this.

Whatever the reason might be, it is certain that after the mirror had come into the house, Anna's health gave way. She was seized with headaches, her hands could not endure the rough toil in the field, and she complained of pain in her chest. In the opinion of her parents, however, she certainly did not look sick at all.

Then one day the manager from the manor-house made them a visit. "We need a housemaid," he said. "Your daughter is not at all suited for the rough work of the fields. Let her come up to the manor-house. There she will have an opportunity to learn something."

Anna went to the manor-house and the mirror went with her.

After a couple of months Anna came home one Sunday. She was pale and did not seem well, but she was very elegant. About her neck she wore a bright-red satin scarf. "Better to have red in your cheeks than to have it around your neck," said her mother. Anna's cheeks reddened at the remark, but were soon paler than before.

Father and mother could not understand what was wrong with her. In the evening they accompanied her some distance on her way. "Good-night, father; good-night, mother." "Good-night, child." — They walked a few steps further. The father was strangely affected. He must warn his daughter. "Anna," he said — she started — "Anna, remember that God in heaven knows and sees everything." He could say no more. — That

night the parents slept little. They realized that vanity had gained complete possession of their daughter's heart. And the worst feature of it was that they themselves had helped to bring this about. Now they realized the significance of the little mirror.

The next day the father went to the manor-house and brought Anna home with him. There she went about her simple duties in a quiet manner. One day she said to her father, "God be praised for making me free! And you, too, dear father, I wish to thank. I was upon the brink of ruin."

But from that day on there was one thing that was hidden from sight, and that was the mirror.

But there was another mirror which was brought out instead, the mirror in which we poor human beings may see what our *heart* looks like, and what the nature of *God's* heart is — the Book of books. In this mirror Anna came to find her delight. And this mirror deceives no one.

The Story of a Young Man

2 Sam. 18.32. "*Is it well with the young man Absalom?*"

It was a calm, clear evening in a city in Germany. The city was situated on the bank of a large river. There was much activity just now upon the river; pleasure boats were moving to and fro.

Near the bank of the river sat a young man. After he had finished his day's work in the office in which he was employed, he had set out to take a walk, for the glorious springtime had now come. He was now sitting and looking upon the bustling scenes before him on the river. In some way or other he was

strangely impressed, and serious thoughts arose within him. — At a little distance from him stood two men, who were about to set forth upon the river in a boat laden with lumber. He heard them say that they wished to arrive before darkness set in at a city a few miles down the river. “Oh, if we only get it out into mid-stream, it will be easy. The boat will surely glide with the current,” said one of the men, as they were making ready for the journey. And very true it was. As soon as the men had rowed the boat out into the river, the speed increased of itself. The young man’s eyes followed the boat for a few brief moments. Then it had disappeared.

He fell into deep thought. The bustle and activity upon the river gradually diminished. After a while, of all the many sounds he had heard only one continued to ring in his ears. This was the words of the boatman to his comrade, “The boat will surely glide with the current.” To begin with he did not give much thought to the words, but they kept recurring to him again and again. He could not rid himself of them; it seemed as if they had burned themselves into his soul.

He was eighteen years old. A year ago he had come to the city and had found employment in the office of a merchant who was an old friend of his father’s. The young man’s father and mother were devoutly pious. At a very early age their child had been brought to the foot of the cross and had experienced something of the love which is “stronger than death.” It was a painful moment, when the parents bade farewell to their son of seventeen years. They knew to what temptations he would be exposed in the city. He took leave of his parents, accompanied by many prayers.

But how was it now with him? This question pressed itself upon him this evening, and the answer — yes, it echoed more and more plainly within him, “The boat will surely glide with the current.”

Yes, he was surely gliding with the current. “Tell me what

company you keep," his father had often said to him, "and I shall tell you who you are and what you will become."

In the office in which he was employed there was another young man, who had been very kind to him from the beginning and had associated much with him. But all questions of a religious nature this young man would dismiss with jest and mockery. It was as if he intended to say, "You are still so green; wait a little, we shall soon get those foolish notions out of your head." And our young friend from the country gradually yielded to this young man and to others like him, merely that he might be left in peace. He was silent when the others scoffed at religion and ridiculed pious Christians. And his silence stimulated them to continued mockery. But after a while even his silent confession became less pronounced. His new friend, however, adapted himself somewhat to the situation in that he refrained from mocking at religion; he even went so far as to accompany the young man from the country to church occasionally. But on the other hand, our young friend also adapted himself to the situation to such an extent that he joined his new friend more and more in his sinful pastimes. He noticed plainly now the absence of all fervor from his prayers. He came to be embarrassed when he met any of the devout Christian people with whom he was acquainted in the city, — the sight of them seemed to him like a judgment upon his own life. Finally the last link burst — he ceased entirely to read the Word of God and attend divine services in God's house. Was he happy then? No, he was not happy, in spite of the fact that he was drinking deep from worldly pleasures. "There is no peace to the wicked."

There were times when a strange feeling of unrest and disgust with life came over him; and this sometimes happened when he was in the midst of his gayety. It was wormwood in his cup. He was drawing water from the "broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

Now he sat looking out upon the river. A few hours before

he had received a letter from his mother. She understood that he had changed. She prayed him insistently to return to Jesus who receives sinners. He knew that his mother had prayed much and wept much as she wrote this letter. It was under these circumstances that he had heard the words, "The boat will surely glide with the current."

Yes, he was gliding with the current. "If it only gets out into mid-stream, it will be easy. The boat will surely glide with the current."

That night he had a strange dream. It seemed to him that he was wading through a river. The water was but little over his feet. To begin with it was very easy; the water was shallow and still, and the bottom was smooth, soft sand. But soon the water became deeper, — it reached his knees. The bottom was covered with stones. Finally it became difficult to maintain a firm footing. Wave upon wave rushed upon him and threatened to carry him away. Then the thought came to him, "It is impossible to keep this up any longer, *it is better to go with the current*. He lay down upon his back, and easily and delightfully he was borne away, at first slowly, then more and more rapidly. He would have found his situation agreeable, if he had not continually been troubled by the thought, "*Whither am I being carried?*" But this thought was so insistent that he was filled with the greatest anxiety as to what the end of this would be. He was going downward with fearful velocity. He cast his arms about for something to lay hold of. Then he awoke with a cry of anguish.

All the next day he was downhearted and restless. He was glad when his day's work was ended. But just as he came out of the office, he met one of his comrades of those former days before he had begun to glide with the current. This comrade greeted him cordially and asked if he might accompany him. Our friend would rather have avoided him, but under the circumstances he could do nothing else than accept his comrade's

company. Accordingly they set off together. For a while both were silent. Then the other said, "I have often thought of asking you a question. It is this, 'Have you not recently lost something?'" — Then our friend could keep silent no longer. "All, all!" he cried. "I have gone with the current, I have lost all!" — "God be praised for that confession!" said the other. "Then there is rescue for you, when you believe yourself to be hopelessly lost." — "For me there is no hope. I am gliding with the current and know not what the end will be." — "Have you turned to the Lord, confessed your sin, and prayed to Him for help? You cannot imagine what power there is in confessing your sin. Do you not remember that the apostle says: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'? Do you not remember what David says: 'When I kept silence, my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long. I acknowledged my sin unto thee...and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin'? Dear friend, I pray you, go and confess all to Jesus as you now have confessed it to me."

And the young man went home and confessed all before Jesus, just as it was. He brought forth his Bible and read the fifteenth chapter of Luke. "I will arise and go to my father," echoed within him. And he repeated the experience of the Prodigal Son. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee...and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. 32).

From that day he no longer went *with* the current; he went *against* it.

The Church Bells

It was a summer evening. The sun set in clouds of gold. The song of the birds had ceased.

A mother and her little son, five years old, were sitting on the lawn before their house. The evening bells began to ring.

"Mother, what is that?"

"That is the bells of the Lord, which tell us that the day is ended."

"What do they say? It seems to me that they are saying something. Do they ask any questions?"

"Yes, they do. Every evening they ask every one a question, and the answer is carried up to God."

"Mother, what are the bells asking me?"

"Listen, my child."

He sat very still. He was listening very attentively, and his eyes seemed to grow larger.

"Mother," he whispered and threw his arms around his mother's neck, "the bells are asking me if I have been a good boy to-day."

"And what can my little Paul answer to that?"

He turned his eyes away. "Mother, I dare not answer the bells; for they will carry my answer up to God, will they not?" Tears came into his eyes and began to roll down his cheeks.

"Have you done anything to-day, my little Paul, which God should not be told about?"

"Mother, I took the horse which was given to Hans on his birthday, and I broke its leg off, and then I put a newspaper over it, so that nobody would see it. What do you suppose God will say?"

The little boy sobbed.

His mother took him up into her arms. "Yes, that was very

bad, my little boy. But now you wish to be a good boy again, and then I shall repair the horse, and we will pray to Jesus that Paul may be a good boy. Fold your hands, Paul."

And the mother prayed, "God the Father, take away my sin — Lord Jesus, pray for me — God the Holy Spirit, make Thy dwelling in my heart."

The evening bells ceased ringing.

Then another bell began to ring,— first, three strokes, then a little pause, and then twice it rang three strokes.

"What is that, mother?"

"That is the prayer bell, Paul."

"What is it praying for?"

"It is praying that Paul may be the child of God the Father, the servant of Jesus Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit."

The last strokes of prayer sounded forth their evening blessing, and then all was still.

The Two Ferns

There were two ferns in the room. Christian asked, "Why does the one grow but the other not?"

They were bought at the same time, they received the same care, but only one of them grew. It looked as though the other would die.

What could be the reason?

The fern which did not grow was sent to a gardener. He examined it carefully. At the root of the fern was a worm. Just a little worm. But it was enough to take the life of the plant.

There were two boys who went to the same Sunday-school. Both received the same instruction.

Both boys grew to manhood. One of them loved his Saviour, the other did not.

What could be the reason?

When He Comes Again

John 1.11. *"He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not."*

About three hundred years ago there reigned in Russia an emperor who was called "Ivan the good." He was deeply concerned about the welfare of his people, and he would often go about in disguise that he might acquaint himself with the circumstances of his subjects.

One cold winter evening a poor beggar with his clothing in tatters went from house to house in a village not far from Moscow. It was the emperor.

From door to door he went, but no one would give him shelter for the night.

Weary and hungry he was about to leave the village, when he noticed a lowly little cottage. He determined to make one further effort to find some one who would offer him hospitality.

And he succeeded. The peasant invited him into the house and bade him be welcome. "But truly you come at an unfavorable moment," he added. "My wife is ill, a newborn babe is with her in the bed, and I have five other hungry mouths to fill."

The emperor entered, ate of the coarse bread, and watched the peasant put his children to bed and care for his sick wife. He asked to see the baby, and held it a while in his arms. Then he lay down to rest upon the hard, stone floor. It was truly

quite a different couch from the one he was accustomed to. But he was tired, and he soon fell asleep.

At dawn he arose. "Wait a period of three hours," he said to the peasant. "I know a rich man. I shall go to him and tell him of your circumstances. I believe that he will consent to be your little child's godfather. In that case you will receive a godfather's present from him, which will be no small one either, I assure you."

The peasant eyed the beggar for a moment in great surprise. Then he promised to wait the specified time before he had the child baptized.

A couple of hours passed. Then loud cries were heard and much rumbling of carriages — the children ran out into the street and back to their father. "The emperor is coming, the emperor is coming!" they cried.

The peasant looked out through the door. He could scarcely believe his eyes — the emperor's coach had stopped before his own door. The emperor left the coach and came forward to him.

"Good morning! my friend. How is your wife getting along? And how is the little boy who is to be my godchild?"

The peasant stammered but could say nothing because of his great surprise. Now he knew what guest he had been entertaining — the emperor in the garb of a beggar.

"He shall be my godchild. He shall be my own child. Here is a gift for him. When he becomes a little older, bring him up to me in the palace. I shall provide for him. It shall not be in vain that you received the emperor into your house."

John 1.12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Guardian Angels

Ps. 34-7. *"The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

Of David it can truly be said that he was always in danger; but it can also be said that in all his danger the angel of the Lord protected him, for he feared the Lord.

You have heard of the glorious vision which the servant of Elisha was permitted to see, when the Syrians surrounded Dothan. When the servant came to Elisha in the morning and said, "Alas, my master! How shall we do?" Elisha answered calmly, "Fear not." Why did not Elisha fear? Because he knew that the angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them. And when through the prophet's prayer the eyes of the servant were opened, he saw what Elisha had all the time seen, "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." This was angel guardianship. You may read the story in 2 Kings, 6.15—17.

The Lord keeps his promises, and He keeps also his promise of protection by angels. You shall hear a story told by a missionary — Van Asselt by name — who labored for many years among the Battak tribe on the island of Sumatra.

"At one time" — so he tells the story — "some Battacks came to us. They were still heathens and cannibals. They asked us what it was that we had raised up around our house. I gave them no answer but asked them instead, 'Why do you wish to know?' Then they replied, 'We have noticed at night that there is a chain around your house and sometimes a double chain. At a great distance it looks like a light. When we sometimes approached it we saw it was human figures in white shining garments. They stood so close to each other that it was not possible to pierce their rank. One of our men at one time attempted

to go right up to them; but he could not, the light was too intense.' ”

* * *

Yes, the Lord does even more than He has promised. This is shown by the following account of an occurrence which took place in India a few years ago.

One day a company of British soldiers were marching through a field. They were all skilled marksmen. At some distance from the company stood a large water jar. While the company made a brief halt in order to rest, the captain advanced to three of the best marksmen and said, “Do you think you can hit that jar over there?” They looked at him in surprise — that surely was a simple matter. “Try it, then,” he said. “If the jar is broken, we can easily pay the owner for his loss.”

The first soldier put his rifle to his shoulder, aimed and fired. When the smoke disappeared, the others laughed at him — the jar was untouched. “That was too bad,” thought the soldier. “If I had only taken time to aim a little more carefully I should certainly have hit it.” — Now the second soldier came forward. “I shall surely hit it,” could be read in the expression of his face. He aimed and shot. “A miss,” cried the others and laughed. “What is the matter with you to-day?” asked the captain. “Is there no one of you that can hit the jar? You try,” he said to the third.

The third soldier aimed long and carefully — all stood in suspense. He fired, but the jar stood unharmed. What could this mean? All ran over to the jar, and as they came nearer it they heard a soft crying. When they reached the jar and looked into it, they found within a little child. Now they knew what it was that turned away the bullets — *the guardianship of angels*.

Real Riches

1 John 3.17. *"But whoso hath the world's goods, and be- holdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"*

In the early days of the church there dwelt in the city of Alexandria a devout servant of the Lord by the name of Makarios. In his congregation there was a young woman who was very rich. But she used her wealth in a manner which was far from becoming to a child of God. She was vain and concerned herself only about fine clothes and precious jewels. This grieved Makarios, her pastor.

One day he went to the home of the young woman and said to her, "Since I know that you are an admirer of precious stones, I came to tell you that I am in a position to procure for you some jewels, — diamonds and emeralds. You can procure them for a mere pittance, — only one thousand. Turn the money over to me and I will negotiate the purchase." This was good news to the young woman. As she reposed entire confidence in the integrity of Makarios, she gave him the money, in order that he might purchase the jewels immediately.

Days and weeks passed, but she had as yet seen nothing of her diamonds and emeralds. She saw and heard Makarios frequently, but he never said a word about his purchase of the precious stones.

Finally she could wait no longer. She went to Makarios and asked, "Well, how about your purchase of the diamonds and the emeralds?" "Fine," he replied, "I bought them the very day I received your money. Come with me and you shall see all the glittering gems. And if you are not satisfied with your bargain, I promise you the return of your money."

They passed through several streets, and arrived at a small

but new house. "Come in with me a moment," said Makarios. It was a home for orphans which the Christians of Alexandria had just established. She saw how the eyes of the children beamed with joy as Makarios sang a hymn with them, and she saw him sit down in their midst and talk with them about their Saviour.

Again they were out upon the street. But Makarios seemed to have numberless errands into the houses which they passed. When they came to a certain large, tall building, he again invited the young woman to enter. This was a home for aged and invalid men and women of the congregation. Makarios went about conversing with the old people who had found a refuge there. At last they came to a room in which upon a bed lay an old man at the point of death. But it was easy to see that in this case, "Death was swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15.54). A tear gleamed in the eye of the aged man, when Makarios asked him how he was. "I am in the same condition as old Simeon," he answered; "'Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation'" (Luke 2.29,30).

Again they walked down the street. Finally they came to the home of Makarios. Now of course he would show her the precious gems.

Makarios seated himself directly facing her. He looked her seriously in the eyes. "You wish to see the emeralds? The little children we just visited I am in the habit of calling the emeralds of the faithful. Did you see how their eyes were radiant with love of Jesus?—And the diamonds? These old people who praise the Lord, these are our diamonds. Have you seen a more beautiful diamond than the tear of joy which shone in eye of the dying man?"

"These are the precious stones, diamonds and emeralds, which I have bought with your money. I think it is the best bargain I ever made. The home for the orphan children and the home

for the aged and invalid, — both of these I have established with your money. Are you satisfied with the bargain?"

The rich young woman was satisfied. Weeping she fell upon her knees and thanked God that her money had been used in this way. She thanked God, too, that her soul had been saved from the death of worldliness.

The rich young woman is a symbol of the true child of God. Who is so rich as a child of God? Even if he does not possess much of the treasures of this world, he is nevertheless possessed of the boundless treasures of the better world; and those treasures are righteousness, peace, and joy. And the Saviour rejoices when He sees His children using their riches to enrich others.

Perpetual Prayer

I Thess. 5.17. "*Pray without ceasing.*"

A number of preachers were once assembled in a parsonage in Germany. The subject of their conversation happened to be the injunction of the apostle Paul to the Christians at Thessalonica, "Pray without ceasing." The discussion continued for some time, but now you shall hear how they came to a right understanding of their subject. — In the employ of the pastor in whose home they were assembled there was a housemaid, an exemplary young woman except in one particular, — she was rather inquisitive. Think of what she did! While the preachers were discussing hither and thither, the one more learnedly than the other, she had taken up a position behind the door leading to an adjoining room. There she stood and listened with the greatest attention to every word that was spoken. She was so absorbed in this that she did not notice that the pastor, the

master of the household, had arisen from his seat. Before she was aware of it, he was in the room where she was standing; and there she was, caught in the act.

“What! Are you standing here eavesdropping?” he exclaimed as if angry. “How could such a thing occur to you, Margaret? But come into the room here. Your punishment shall be that you must tell us how you apply to your daily life these words of the apostle, ‘Pray without ceasing.’”

Resistance was in vain; Margaret must come in. She was, of course, far from pleased that her eavesdropping should have such unpleasant consequences. For a while she stood embarrassed.

Then she began modestly:

“Well, I do not see that these words are difficult to understand. I take them quite literally and obey them as well as I can.

“When I awake in the morning, the first thing I do is to thank God for keeping me through the night. And then I pray that His grace and mercy may follow me through the day.

“When I have done this, I dress; and then I think that it is of no consequence how mean and poor my dress may be. The really important thing is to be clad in the raiment which Jesus gives us, — his righteousness.

“Then I wash. As I do this, I am reminded of the fact that Jesus had made me clean and pure through the washing of regeneration in holy baptism, and that the blood of Christ has cleansed me from all sin.

“After this I go to the kitchen. The first thing I do there is to kindle the fire. I gather together kindling and wood and light it. Then as the fire begins to burn, at first slowly and gently, but then more and more rapidly until all is in a great blaze, I think of the light of the gospel, which in so many places of the earth is as yet a mere spark but which shall soon shed its full light upon all the world.

“Next I prepare the morning meal and place it upon the table. And when I am busied with the food, I cannot help thinking of the bread of life and of Him who said, ‘He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.’

“When the breakfast is prepared, I go up to the pastor’s study and begin to sweep and dust. But when I begin to sweep, how can I take a broom into my hands — she said this with tears in her eyes — without thinking of her who swept and swept until she had found the piece of silver, the lost piece of silver?”

In this way she continued for quite a while,— she, the illiterate housemaid, who applied the Word of God to all of her trivial duties.

A well-known preacher says, “Prayer is the breath of a Christian. He who has a living faith in his heart prays always. Not that he spends the whole day upon his knees, but wherever he is, in his business house, in his office, or at work in his shop, his heart always finds opportunity to hold converse with God.”

Luke 18.1. “And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

Two Faces

Acts 6.15. “*And all . . . saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*”

In the city of Milan, in Italy, lived many, many years ago a famous painter, whose name was Leonardo da Vinci. He painted many beautiful pictures of scenes in the life of the Saviour, but the most beautiful of all is surely “The Last Supper.” Leonardo worked upon this painting for many years, and he

prayed over his work. He took as models for the faces of the disciples the faces of some of his own friends in Milan. But he had not yet found a face which he could use as a model for the face of the Saviour. Finally his attention was called to a young man, Pietro Bandinelli, who was a singer, renowned for his exquisitely beautiful voice. Here Leonardo found that which he had been seeking. A more lovable countenance could scarcely be imagined, piety and purity beamed through his eyes. Leonardo made inquiries concerning the young man's life. All praised him. And so this young man became the model for Leonardo's painting of the figure of the Saviour. The painting was just completed, as Pietro left the city for Rome where he was still further to develop his voice. — But while in Rome he fell among evil companions and — "Tell me with whom you associate, and I shall tell you what you yourself will become." He became a Prodigal Son. Deeply and still more deeply did he sink into sin and dissipation of every kind, and he ended as a criminal. But of all this Leonardo knew nothing.

His great painting was nearly finished. There was but one face lacking, and that was the face of Judas, the son of perdition.

One day as Leonardo was passing along the street, a miserable creature met him. It was a man in rags, filthy, with hair uncombed, and with a shy, shrinking air about him. The painter was startled, — here was a real Judas-model. He engaged the man to sit for him as a model. When Leonardo had finished the figure of Judas, the man said to him, "But do you not remember that you have used me as your model once before?" — When Leonardo then looked more closely at him, whom do you suppose he found the man to be? It was Pietro Bandinelli.

Such power has sin to change the face and the heart.



